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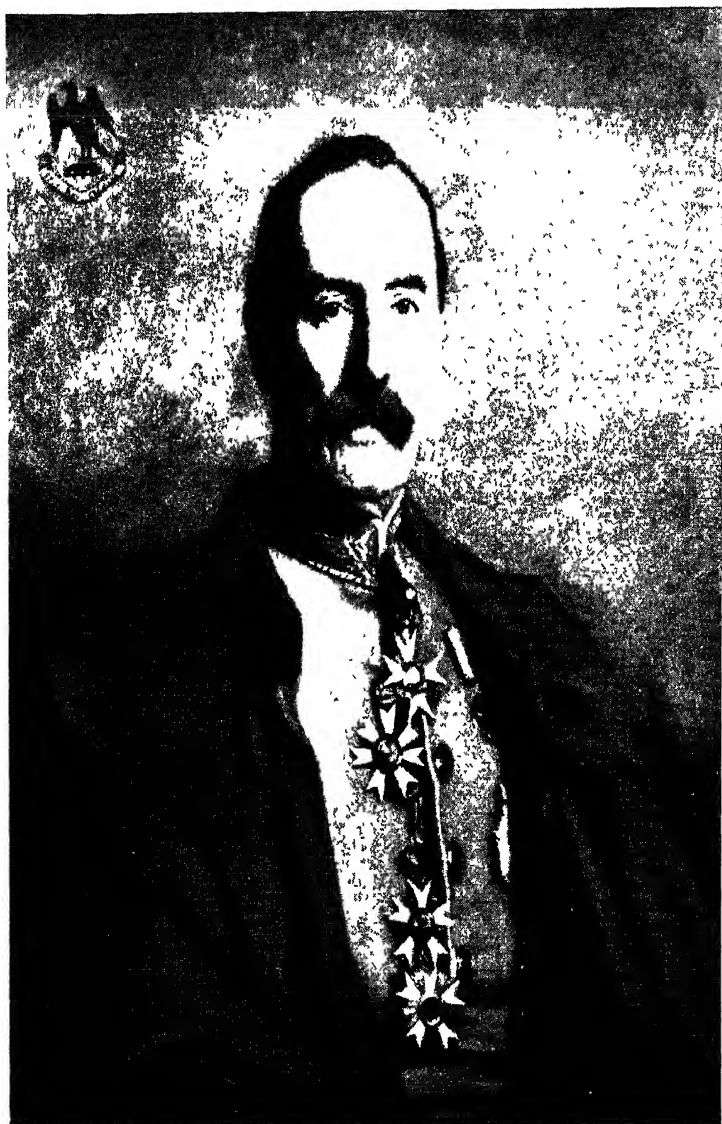


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GENERAL BINGHAM

# PEACE PATROL

BY

LT.-COL.

STEWART RODDIE

C.V.O.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

SIR ALMERIC FITZROY

K.C.B., K.C.V.O.



LONDON

CHRISTOPHERS

22, BERNERS STREET, W.1.

CAPE TOWN : MELBOURNE : SYDNEY : WELLINGTON : TORONTO





*First published in 1932*

*Printed in Great Britain*

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TO  
MAJOR-GENERAL  
THE HON. SIR FRANCIS BINGHAM  
IN RESPECT, ADMIRATION AND  
AFFECTION

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## INTRODUCTION

BY SIR ALMERIC FITZROY

**I** FIRST had the privilege of Colonel Stewart Roddie's friendship in 1918 when he was home convalescent from wounds received in France, and I was closely in touch with him from 1918 to 1926, through his days in the Treasury, and then on his first important mission, when, as senior of a band of three, he was sent by the War Office to find out the condition of Germany immediately after the War.

As one mission succeeded another, he sent me stories of the days of German revolution and of the inflation—stories humorous, dramatic, and often tragic. His quick insight and imaginative sympathy, as he watched Germany pass through the agony of revolution and chaos, were invaluable to official circles both in London and Berlin, and I am indeed glad that the public has now an opportunity of reading this vivid story of a nation's re-birth.

The central theme of this book is the disarmament of Germany. The reader will find here recorded what was characteristic in Germany after the War, ranging from the powers directing her destiny down to the underworld. There is the drama of the martyred

Rathenau, the last days at Spa, the pathos of the picture of Friedrichshof, the lively account of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, and much else.

But the book is not confined to Germany ; there are appreciations of the dethroned rulers of Greece, of America and Americans, and intimate glimpses of such men as the late Lord Rosebery, Lord Haldane, Lord Haig, and the British Head of the Disarmament Mission, Sir Francis Bingham, with many letters to the author of the highest interest.

Every page bears the impress of Colonel Roddie's personality, and it is a welcome moment for me, who prophesied that he could write a book worth reading, when I can introduce it to what I hope will be a very large public.

A.F.

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# PEACE PATROL

## CHAPTER I

### ARMISTICE AND REVOLUTION

EARLY on a January morning in 1919 the "Armistice Special" wheezed its asthmatic course into the Potsdam station of Berlin. The rattle of a machine-gun unpleasantly near caused me to hesitate for a moment as I stepped on to the platform.

A knee in the small of my back put an end to my momentary indecision, and clutching our precious sack of tinned food, I put my feet gingerly on the ice-covered step, slipped, and fell, Captain Bell and Captain Tennant on the top of me, into a horde of shoving, shivering, shouting humanity. We picked ourselves up, brushed the snow from our "British-warms," readjusted the angle of our caps, and looked around.

We found ourselves in the midst of the revolution, the station being one of the strongholds of the Red Army. A dirty, disorderly mob it was, in all kinds and combinations of uniform and civilian clothing. A red band on the hat or sleeve was the only distinctive sign.

While we stood in some bewilderment, a railway

official, evidently impressed by our martial appearance, hurried towards us and politely offered his services. We explained that we were three British officers on a mission to Berlin and that we had expected to be met by a representative of either the German War Office or Foreign Office. He looked worried, said he had had no instructions, but would do what he could to get us safely out of the station. The mob crowded round us like a pack of inquisitive animals. They all looked half-starved, inexpressibly dirty and most of them half dazed. Woodenly they permitted our guide to force a passage through them to the station yard, where we were fortunate to find a single one-horse vehicle.

As we loaded our baggage into the antiquated droschke we rewarded the helpful railway employee with a tin of tomato soup. From his emaciated appearance we judged that this would be a highly acceptable *pourboire*, and in fact his gratitude was so unfeigned that he tried to embrace Bell on the spot.

The driver agreed to take us to the Adlon Hotel for about ten times the usual fare. Just as we were starting, a burst of machine-gun fire again broke out, this time quite close on our left. "It's that cursed Irishman on the Brandenburg gate," said the coachman.

"Irishman?"

"Yes, one of Casement's men. There are a lot of them taking odd jobs with the Red Army. One of them is up there," he replied, and pointed to the top of the celebrated gate which commands the sweep

of the Linden. "And he just turns on that damned gun any time he feels like it."

"Good Lord!" I said, "I thought the War was over."

He turned his head and looked at us sharply, "Not for us," he replied mournfully, "we're all fighting ourselves now."

The route to the Adlon took us right along the line of fire; fortunately the Irishman's moment of exaltation had passed, and in a short time we were luxuriously installed in what had been, and was even then, one of the finest hotels in the world.

"*Endlich*," said Tennant, on the same principle on which he would have said "*Enfin*" had we been arriving at the Ritz in Paris.

About noon the last stain of travel and strain of fatigue had gone, and we settled ourselves in the largest of our three bedrooms—to consider.

Tennant threw his six-foot-one on the bed. Bell, being the littlest and youngest, seated himself in the easy chair with a "continuation" for the feet. I had the sofa.

"Well! Here we are," said Tennant.

Ten days before, none of us knew that either of the other two existed, and certainly none of us guessed that within a few weeks of the end of the Great War we should be wearing our uniforms in the capital of the enemy country.

A rather too-close proximity to a German high explosive shell had caused me to spend the last few months of the War in England. First in a London

hospital and then—on convalescence—as a temporary *aide* in H.M. Treasury, where I was given the interesting occupation of dealing with matters pertaining to the Ministry of Information. Lord Northcliffe was then Minister, his distinguished assistants including Mr. Masfield, Mr. Buchan and Mr. Arnold Bennett.

These were a few of those, who, during the latter years of the War, had assisted in evolving or carrying out schemes for propaganda in the allied, neutral and enemy countries. An indisputable testimony to the success of this Ministry is that up to the present day most Germans attribute the loss of the War not to military failure, but to the “demoralisation of the army and the population, caused by the poisonous and lying propaganda with which they were first insidiously fed and then wantonly steeped.”

This may or may not be exaggeration, but of one thing there can be no doubt whatsoever, as must have been apparent to anyone who had, as I had, the opportunity of studying Germany in the early days after the Armistice—this propaganda brought about conditions in Germany which were instrumental in bringing the World War to a close many months earlier than would otherwise have been the case. Over the trenches of the German army, back into the reserve lines, allied aeroplanes had been feeding the already dissatisfied troops with the unpleasant truth about conditions in the Fatherland. Rumours of dissension in the higher ranks, of defeats camouflaged as victories, and of starvation among those left at home, were rife. This propaganda was the match that at last set flame to the country. Its deadliness lay in the

fact that it was true, or at least closely related to fact. The German troops accepted it as such. In the early days of November 1918 they packed up their kit bags and turned homewards. Prince Max of Baden secured the abdication of the Kaiser. The ex-Emperor left for Holland. The German Republic was proclaimed and the Armistice was signed.

London in the days immediately after the Armistice was a hectic place. The armies returned. A riot of feasting and entertainment greeted them. Promises of plenty, rosy pictures of peace and prosperity were just what the people wanted—and what they got. Pensions, work for all, Germany to pay for everything, the Kaiser to stand in the dock in London, the spoils of victory within sight!

There had been sufficient suffering—what good would there be in pointing out that the winning of a war in 1918 was utterly different from what it was in 1815 or in 1870? The few who realised even then that there would be little, if any, profit to the victors, held their peace—and who shall blame them?

I have often since those days recalled the prophetic utterance of Kate, the old vegetable vendor, who, one day back in 1916 in the barracks of Clonmel, clutched me by the sleeve crying:

“Captain, did ye read the dear Lord Lansdowne’s proposals? Is it throe—is it throe that we are *threatened* wid paice at last?”

Although the Armistice, which resulted in a cessation of armed hostilities, had been proclaimed on

November 11th, 1918, peace was not signed until June, 1919, and only ratified in January 1920—seven months later. According to the law of nations, a state of war still existed between the allied nations and Germany. The terms of peace so easy to discuss were difficult to formulate. Had it been a case of one country settling scores with another, the matter would have been simple. But the interests—in most cases at variance—of over a score of different countries had to be considered, and terms more or less acceptable to all had to be agreed upon. Paris was to be the home of the Peace Conference, and from all over the world came generals, politicians and diplomats.

Meantime, as the days passed, the news from Germany was grim.

“The bleeding body of Germany was sold by a traitorous, so-called ‘Government’ into shameful bondage—the Revolution, the seeds of which had been sown by the sailors at Kiel, was spreading all over the country—Civil War had broken out—Communists (or Spartacists, as the extreme among them called themselves), Monarchists and the new Republicans were tearing at each other’s throats—Berlin was a bath of blood—the Spree was choked with corpses ; starvation and pestilence ravaged the land.”

Such were the wild and startling tales that reached the world in the days that followed the Armistice.

Realising that justice must be tempered by judgment, it was deemed advisable that the immediate enforcement of the terms on which the Armistice had been granted should be regulated in accordance with

the conditions—not which were merely *said* to exist on the other side of the Rhine—but which actually *did* exist. It was evident that information coming from the Germans themselves could hardly be relied upon, and it was decided that an unbiassed, first-hand report was essential.

Although I had, at the request of Sir Almeric FitzRoy, Clerk to the Privy Council, been lent to H.M. Treasury, where the finances of the Ministry of Information were controlled, I was actually on the strength of the War Office. Some months previously, realising that the condition of my wound would preclude my returning to the front for a considerable time, I had filled up a form on which I had set forth all the accomplishments which I fondly hoped might enable me to find favour with the Army Intelligence Department. The account of my knowledge of German and of Germany was evidently of so satisfactory a nature, that when the information on the contemporary state of affairs in Germany was required I was sent for, and was instructed to proceed on a mission to Berlin.

It was on that occasion that, for the first time, I met my two colleagues, now lounging lazily in my bedroom at the Adlon. Captain Ernest Tennant, of the well-known Scottish family, was a typical young British sportsman. During the War he had done intelligence work. He spoke German well and knew the country. His appointment to the mission had been a last-minute one, the original third having failed. I do not know who the original third was, but I am grateful for whatever circumstance caused his absence. Captain Claude Bell, too, had



done a certain amount of work on the Intelligence staff, and was also a first-rate linguist. He had a genial, humorous nature, a quality so engaging and disarming that it was a distinct asset to him in his work. He always travelled with an imaginary stringed instrument from which he could produce the most delectable and realistic strains. Many a long travelling hour was whiled pleasantly away by his comic songs and the illusion of their string accompaniment.

The Three Musketeers never started on adventure with greater zest than did we three on the night on which we boarded the train at Victoria to enter the first stage of the journey which was to take us into "the enemy country."

The journey from Boulogne to Spa was trying. The hospital train by which we travelled might have functioned efficiently as a refrigerator. Several times we were held up for hours while the railway line, damaged in the War, was repaired sufficiently for us to proceed. With the aid of newspapers and sacks we managed to augment the warmth of our overcoats and blankets sufficiently to prevent frost bite. Tennant had been chewed in the chest by a lion in East Africa and Bell had been gassed, so both suffered more than I. At Spa, in Belgium, the Armistice Commission was sitting, and here we were provided with the necessary passes for our further journey into Germany.

At Spa we were taken by one of the French General Staff to the villa which had served as the Kaiser's Headquarters, and shown the celebrated Imperial "funk-hole." A trap-door in the hall led down

several steps to a sloping underground passage, which terminated in a strong room built of reinforced concrete. The actual situation of this was under the middle of the lawn about a hundred yards from the house. Egress was given to a clump of rhododendron bushes a hundred yards further on by another passage sloping upwards.

Much scorn and ridicule has been heaped on the Imperial Hohenzollern on account of the "funk-hole," but it was just as reasonable that the Kaiser should be protected from air raids as that we should take to our cellars under similar conditions. None of us during the War liked to be far from a "funk-hole," and many an undignified entrance most of us made into one or another of them during air raids, agreeing with the Irishman that "it was better to be a coward for five minutes, than dead for the rest of your life."

From Spa we continued on our journey uneventfully to Cologne. Here we spent twenty-four hours prior to joining the "Armistice Special" for the interior. This was probably the only train in Germany then running to schedule. The rolling stock still left to Germany by the Allies was in sorry condition, and the best—nothing to brag about at that—was used for this particular train, which plied two or three times weekly between Berlin and Spa, carrying, mainly, delegates of the German Government back and forth to the delightful Belgian watering-place where the Armistice Inter-Allied Commission still sat in conference.

Cologne was full of British troops, and there we

made our headquarters in the excellently equipped Officers' Club. From the canteen of the 2nd Army Corps we got a stock of provisions—bread, butter, milk, soups, bully beef and soap. According to popular rumour we would need them. Rumour, we found, had not lied.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC

“**W**ELL, here we are,” said Tennant, stretching his long legs on the bed and filling his pipe.

“Here we are, here we are, here we are again,” strummed Bell on his invisible ukulele, adding, as the sound of desultory rifle fire reached our ears : “And I wish I had brought my old steel helmet with me.”

We had expected to be met, but were, on the whole, glad to have the opportunity of becoming accustomed to our novel surroundings before the serious matter of work commenced.

In the restaurant of the hotel we found the members of a French mission. The Hoover Relief Commission was also represented and a notice in the hall informed us that “The American Chamber of Commerce” was already functioning—the early bird indeed ! We were the object of obvious curiosity ; courteous, aloof, yet very attentive the Germans were. The more attention they bestowed on us, the more they were likely to learn what we were doing. They all thought we were spies, and had we told them what was the absolute fact, that we had nothing to conceal, no one would have believed us.

After luncheon we returned to our rooms in some

doubt as to how next to proceed, but almost immediately our first visitor was announced.

"Gentleman from the War Office, sir!"

He appeared on the threshold, huge and ugly, oozing dislike and breathing hostility.

"There's a nasty bit of work," said Bell in an undertone while he greeted the intruder with a bow.

In an aggressive manner the stranger introduced himself.

"I am Major —. I have been sent here by the War Office to ask what you want. I don't know anything about the business. What is it?"

We felt certain that the man was not reflecting the spirit of the War Office, but was merely being rude and ill-mannered.

"In that case," he was told, "just return to the War Office and say that we shall wait until they send someone who does know something about the business."

"Oh, well," he stammered, somewhat taken aback, "Of course I know——"

"Of course you do, but just give that message, all the same."

Bell was reciting in low monotone :

"I do not like you Dr. Fell.  
The reason why I cannot tell,  
But this I know, and know full well,  
I do not like you, Dr. Fell."

Our visitor, despite a distinct change of front, was politely but firmly bowed out. But he had depressed us. If that was the sort of thing we were to expect, our work was not going to be easy.

A couple of hours later, however, one of the most delightful and courtly men I have ever had to deal with appeared in our apartment, and in faultless English said :

"Gentlemen, I wish to explain and express my regret for a little misunderstanding. I was asked some time ago by Count Bernstorff, the former German Ambassador to the United States, to look after you and to assist you in every way while you are in this country. I happened to be out when Count Bernstorff learned of your arrival, so he asked the War Office to send someone to you in the meantime. I gather," and he smiled, "that the experiment was not altogether a success. Well, here *I* am. Will you accept *my* services."

Thus did we make the acquaintance of Major von Schweinitz, son of a former German Ambassador to Russia, and of an American mother ; son-in-law of Count von Eulenburg, the patriarchal Hof-Marschall of the ex-Kaiser. We felt from the first moment that we were fortunate, and when our mission ended we knew that whatever success attended it had been due in no small measure to the loyal, patient help given us by this former Guards' officer.

How often must it have been wormwood and gall for him to have to listen to the questions we *had* to put to military and other officials. How often must the iron have entered his soul when he had to help us in these matters.

"Doesn't it hurt you, Major, to have to be associated with your former enemies in this way?"

"Hurt? Oh, when one has been hurt a great deal,

and has suffered for a long time, one bears the hurt more easily. But I do not like to think I have ever shown you——”

“You never have, it is just that we know you must feel it. What seems strange is that you, who were an officer in the Kaiser’s Guards, give your services to this new Republic.”

“One serves a Kaiser because of one’s country, and not one’s country because of a Kaiser. The fact that I am at the moment prevented from serving my Kaiser does not affect my loyalty to him, any more than it relieves me of my duty to my country.”

How shall I describe Berlin as we found it then? Berlin—that used to be a model of order and cleanliness. I wrote in a report at that time, “Dirt, disorder, dancing and death! The town is filthy. The traffic is chaotic, as there are no police to control it. All the dancing halls are crammed and when the bands stop playing one hears the shriek of a shell and the crack of rifle fire outside where the Spartacist and the Republican troops are shooting each other dead.”

They were mad, these people. Some only a little, but some quite. The five years’ struggle! The vain sacrifices! Years of under-nourishment. The crashing blow of failure—for which they were utterly unprepared. The Kaiser gone! An Armistice—a peace—which had only brought the War right into their midst! And it was not even the German fighting his enemies, but the German fighting his own people—his own kith and kin. Was it any wonder they were all unbalanced? They did not understand it; they had not the strength to try! Nothing

mattered. It was all finished. All except the tune the band was blaring out and what was still in the bottle !

Were we Poles ? they asked. Russians ? Rumanians ? It did not matter, the world was coming to an end anyhow. "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow . . ." What ?

Along the Linden, from the Schloss to the Wilhelm Strasse, ladies of the pavement followed us, eagerest of all to resume friendly relations. Were there more like us coming, they wanted to know. What would we give them ? Money was no good. A cake of soap ? Butter ? Had we any grease paint ? Couldn't we get some ? They were using burnt cork and beet-root just now. Business was rotten. Men wanted everything for nothing, just because they wore uniform. "And that's what comes of this accursed War !"

There were three of them there one evening, and we sent the porter out with three cakes of soap. They passed us frequently afterwards, but always tactfully, without a sign of greeting other than a muttered "*Danke, danke*" slipped sideways towards us from faces bearing distinct evidence that our gifts had not been bestowed in vain.

From Major von Schweinitz and other first-hand witnesses we heard the story of the happenings in Germany—previous and subsequent to the Armistice—which had led to the present state of the country.

It was weeks before the Armistice that the real trouble had begun. The Fleet had long been in-



active ; the men were known to be restless and dissatisfied. Something had to be done. A grand concerted military and naval action was decided upon. Every arrangement for the great coup was complete. The German Grand Fleet, escorted by aircraft and submarines, was to sail, draw out the English Fleet and engage in a great and decisive battle. It was, however, more as a heroic gesture than with any real hope of success that it was staged. The Great Headquarters Staff must have known that they were only throwing good money after bad, and more lives into the jaws of defeat.

All was in readiness. The orders to go into action were actually given. And then—the Fleet mutinied.

The Navy, like the Army, had been soaked with Bolshevik propaganda. Long periods of inactivity had induced a condition which had rendered both peculiarly sensitive and receptive. The Navy as a navy was ruined. Of the Army, over 30,000 deserted during the few weeks before the Armistice, but, be it said, these 30,000 did not represent the old German Army. These latter—what remained of them—still occupied the front lines and ungrudgingly, uncomplainingly and gallantly carried on. The deserters were those who until the latter part of the war had been suckled at home on high wages and light work—men who for years, on this ground or on that, had successfully claimed exemption from military service. Socialism had been making tremendous strides in the Fatherland. The reply of the Authorities was to dispatch numbers of its advocates into the armies fighting on all fronts. It was a terrible blunder, as

Germany during the next few years was to learn to her bitter cost.

By the time the Armistice was signed thousands of these Spartacists, as they then called themselves, had found their way to Berlin. They were about as evil and destructive-minded a group as can be imagined. They made their headquarters in the Schloss and in the royal stables. Liebknecht, one of their leaders, a fanatic disciple of Karl Marx, appeared on the balcony of the old Schloss and proclaimed a Communist Republic on Russian Soviet principles. A hundred and fifty thousand people paraded the streets, shouting, "Freedom, Peace and Food."

Liebknecht and his Spartacists could give them none. In November 1918 a general strike was proclaimed. This added fuel to the flame. The city was in a state of terror. Government troops, such as were available and could be trusted, were sent against the Spartacists, and a horrible guerilla warfare was waged in which a wholly unnecessary and brutal loss of life was sustained.

The people congregated in front of the Sovereign's Palace, and sprayed it with bullets; revolver bullets, machine-gun bullets, rifle bullets. From the raucous voices of hordes of gaunt, half-starved men and women came the strains of "The Red Flag." Somewhere among the crowd, one misguided devotee of the departed Hohenzollerns, innocent of satirical intention, attempted to raise the national anthem, "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz," but they bashed him over the head with a rifle butt, and with that "The Song of

Victory " passed into an even more complete oblivion than had its last exponent.

Such were the chaotic conditions in Berlin, when, on November 9th, Philip Scheidemann, a Socialist deputy, stood on the steps of the Reichstag and proclaimed " The German Republic," and the German Nation passed from the autocracy of its great Imperialism to " a government of the people, by the people, for the people."

## CHAPTER III

## THE BLOCKADE

IT was not the policy of the Allies to supply food to Germany unless the food in that country was already being properly controlled and distributed. To send food for the poor, merely in order to release more food for the rich, was not the intention. Our enquiries brought to light the fact that a considerable proportion of the food already in the country was not available for the civil population. "The Army had to be fed." But was not the Army disbanded in accordance with the terms of the Armistice? The amount of rations allotted for military use showed that a large army was still being maintained. The Government was between the Devil and the deep sea. Disband the army and the country would become Bolshevik. Maintain a large army and they had the Allies to answer to.

We realised the difficulty—if the country was to be saved from anarchy the people must be fed. Hospitals, schools, asylums, jails, barracks and private houses had all the same sickening fare : turnips, tares, lentils (for the lucky ones), scarcely ever meat. Milk only for babies, and then a minimum quantity. Fats were practically non-existent.

Numbers of the young children were suffering from

rickets, an illness known in Germany as the "English" disease. This appellation was merely the result of the similarity between the words "*Englische*" and "*Engelsche*," "Engel" being the name of a doctor who had announced a cure for the disease. This explanation has generally been lost sight of and we found most people firmly convinced that rickets was one of the many evils for which they were indebted to England.

For large sums of money food of all kinds could be had. In the hotels and better class restaurants one found, as one lady expressed it, "all those horrible gourmands sitting with their gourmets" eating luxuries. The example, however, was bad, and the authorities were trying hard to control the illicit sale of food.

The municipal markets had been converted into public kitchens, and here thousands from all classes of society were fed daily. It was a great, if not a happy, democracy. Hunger is a great leveller. The rag-picker stood cheek by jowl with the professor. And what an extraordinary appearance they presented—miserable, gaunt, emaciated, shivering.

We commented to Major von Schweinitz on the entire absence of dogs and cats, and he told us there were no more. "All sausages long ago!" The cows we saw were miserable bony beasts. They were being fed on straw, as the turnips they should have had were being used for consumption by the population.

During the last two years of the war these people—the civil population—had endured privation patiently and bravely, to a degree unsuspected by the

Allies. The confiscated colonies were pouring their populations into the Fatherland. Disbanded troops were flocking back, demanding to be fed and clothed.

"The blockade ! Oh God, raise the blockade !" was the cry we heard on all sides. "The War has been lost, but not on the field : only by the propaganda of the Northcliffe Press !"

Why should the victor punish the vanquished like this, they asked. It was so unsportsmanlike—so un-British to kick a fellow when he was down.

The people had come to believe firmly that they had fought in self-defence. They knew nothing—had never heard—of the crimes with which Germany was charged. The army was a synonym for chivalry.

"Nurse Cavell ? Captain Fryatt ? Sinking of hospital ships ? Cruelty to prisoners ?" they asked "Who ever heard of such things ?" And even if the Allies did blame Germany for causing the War, they pointed out, were not those who had been responsible all gone ?

They were like children who felt themselves unjustly punished, with the result that they were rebellious. The Armistice terms, they considered cruel, unjust and vindictive. The general opinion was that the Government that had accepted them was only fit to be spat upon : a Government that had agreed to hand over to the enemy all the cows, while mothers and infants were dying in Germany like flies !

Money—what good was money ? "Look," said one man, "I can show you my pockets full of money—and then come home with me and I'll show you my children—with rickets."

What a mess it all was. The Government was at its wits' end. Until the people were clothed and fed rational behaviour could not be expected from them. They were insane and uncontrollable. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the Communist agitators, had just been bludgeoned to death in public on the doorstep of the Hotel Eden, and their bodies thrown into the canal. This example of summary mob justice would be followed by God knows what.

We advised the raising of the blockade. In a report I sent to England at that time I wrote :—

“ To those of us who have had the opportunity of studying Germany recently from the inside, the policy of continuing the starvation of that country appears not only senseless, but harmful to ourselves. My visit to Saxony has strengthened the conviction to which the study of conditions in other parts had already led, namely, that the one and only result must be disaster. Germany is now on the brink of a volcano which may erupt at any moment. It would be folly to imagine that the ensuing disaster would be confined to Germany. The Bolsheviks are carrying their campaign into Holland, Belgium, France and Britain. It can only be wise to consider the position with all seriousness while the power to avert the catastrophe is still with us.”

There was not a stratum of life into which we did not penetrate in order to satisfy ourselves that we were not forming a one-sided and biassed opinion. Nowhere were we treated with anything but tolerance

and courtesy. It is perhaps a curious fact that during the succeeding years when, as chief of one of the sections of the Inter-Allied Commission of Control, I had duties to perform which might, naturally enough, have made me an object of hatred and detestation to the Germans, I cannot recall one occasion on which I received rudeness or insult from them. Difficulties—yes. Obstruction—yes. Stupidity—yes. But never incivility—and never servility.

I remember that at a dinner party at Lady St. Helier's in London, my comments in this vein were received in a silence which expressed grave disapproval. This was broken by a husky whisper from a stalwart peeress: "I expect he has a German mistress."

As soon as we had made up our minds about the difficulties and dangers with which *internally* Germany was fraught, we decided that a report should be delivered with the least possible delay to the Peace Conference then sitting in Paris. It was arranged that one of us should leave for Paris by aeroplane. The lot fell upon Tennant and, while Bell and I prepared to visit other parts of the country, he chartered a 'plane and took the air for Paris. Poor Tennant! Buffeted about by a gale worse than an equinoctial, and in a vile snowstorm, he had to make a forced landing in some forsaken spot near the Ruhr. Starved with cold and soaked through, no change of clothing, the precious report reduced almost to a sodden pulp—how he must have cursed the fate that made him draw the longest match twenty-four hours previously! But in time he reached Paris safe and sound.



Bell and I meantime were pursuing our enquiries. Bell went to the Cassel area and I to Saxony. I travelled to Leipzig in a first-class compartment, from which all the covering of the seats had been cut away. The leather window straps were gone, and the windows broken. I walked through the train. Everywhere the same. I spoke to the guard about it. He told me that the passengers had taken everything for clothing. When they could not open the windows they just broke them. There was very little grease for the axles, and all the machinery was in shocking repair. All the reliable rolling stock was confiscated. The engineers were all dead or wounded ; the young fellows back from the front wouldn't or couldn't work. We might break down, he said, at any moment.

We did. I arrived in Leipzig about 2 o'clock in the morning, and was met by an officer of the police who had been detailed by the municipal authorities to sponsor me. He carried out his duties faithfully and efficiently, but he was like a dog that had found a bone and wouldn't let go. I used to look outside my bedroom door in the middle of the night expecting to find him lying on the mat. He was a good fellow, but how I wanted to lose him. I had to tell him so at last. He shook his head sadly and told me he was just as sick of me. The temper of the people was an unknown quantity, however, and there was no knowing when they might take it into their heads to "remove" me. I told him I was touched but bored by this consideration.

It was not consideration for me, he explained, in

his turn. But now that the Allies had the upper hand they might make a fuss—perhaps demand compensation—if anything happened. That had to be avoided.

I begged him to believe that I was worth no more than a decent burial. He seemed to be of the same way of thinking, and eventually gave me welcome, though unflattering proof of his opinion by confining his attendance to business hours.

He was a capable officer and a competent guide. With him I discussed the War and its causes. He, like the others, was firmly convinced that Germany had never at any time behaved otherwise than strictly honourably. The mobilisation by Russia, he claimed, had necessitated the mobilisation of the German army. The German notes to Austria after Serajevo might have been bad diplomacy, but the War had been determined upon by France, Russia and Britain—Britain, who should have remained neutral ! Britain had dumped ammunition in Belgium months before the outbreak of war ! Britain had put women and children in the forefront of the battle—had she not loaded the “Lusitania” with ammunition ? Britain employed female spies in Belgium and then, with diabolical cunning, had used the shooting of one as propaganda. Why—just because Germany, hampered with a couple of millstones round her neck (Austria and Turkey) had fought for her honour and freedom against thirty-two allied countries—why should her name be anathema ? Why should it stink in the nostrils of the whole world ?

That was the cry—always. Why ? Why ? Why ?

Guilty of stupidity Germany may have been, my guard admitted, but not of crime. The shooting of Nurse Cavell, for example : of course according to military law it might be justified, but oh ! what folly. When the Kaiser learned at breakfast one morning that his own efforts to intervene on Nurse Cavell's behalf had been too late had he not jumped up, struck the table, and said, " My God ! those damned fools have lengthened this war by two years " ?

I let him pour out the bitterness of his soul to me. Like everyone else I met, he was absolutely convinced of Germany's virtue—her only fault was that she had lost !

I had a sentimental interest in Saxony. I had been to school there and, as a boy, had received unforgettable kindnesses from Saxon friends. I wandered past the barracks of Dresden, where I had once gone with a friend, Lieutenant von Tschammer und Osten, on the occasion of the entry of the King of Saxony's second son into his regiment. I could hear again the wheezy roar of the burly bourgeois monarch : " Gentlemen, I have the honour for the second time to present one of my sons to your regiment."

I looked in through the railings on to the parade ground. I could picture the little Prince, as I had seen him then, twelve years old, in all the paraphernalia of full dress uniform, goose-stepping with desperate energy in an endeavour to maintain the regulation length of pace.

The King had gone. His valedictory remark, in the same old wheezy voice, and with a gesture of amused contempt, has become history. "*Nun macht*

*Eueren Dreck aleene.*" ("Now look after your own dung heap.")

Our report eventually reached the War Office, and was distributed to both Houses of Parliament. It was not, we understood, without effect at the Peace Conference in Paris. But during the weeks that passed before the blockade was raised matters went from bad to worse in Germany.

In March 1919 I received these letters from a German associated with the Red Cross who had worked with us in Berlin. They well express the feeling at that time in Germany, and show the slough of despond into which Germany had sunk.

*23rd March, 1919.*

"You will, of course, have read of what has happened since you were here. The fighting—which we told you would take place—was terrible, and the Government had the greatest difficulty in getting the upper hand. Masses of troops and despairing but determined leaders, unfortunately even from the ranks of the 'intellectuals,' joined the Spartacists.

"So far the Spartacist attempts have been broken, but only at the cost of hundreds of lives of those shot down under martial law. Such appalling methods can only be justified eventually if those who use them can prove them to be successful. This, of course, depends entirely on the Paris decisions, and so far it would not appear that these will help. It now looks as if Germany is to be forced to go the same way as Hungary, namely, that after the present Government have been discredited

on account of their failure to carry out any of their promises, power will pass entirely into the hands of the workmen, who will at once join forces with Moscow. What that will mean, you know.

“ I consider it my duty to tell you how terribly near the danger is, and when *I* take it upon myself to point these things out to you it is not because of my own private opinions, but because of my close association with Ministers on one side, and, on the other, my intimacy with the socialist circles. And I regret to say that since you were here, numbers of my unfortunate friends have, out of sheer desperation, thrown in their lot with the Spartacists because they cannot see *one* glimmer of hope.

“ Things have changed so much for the worse that in three or four weeks we may *all* be driven to this. Can you not come here before it is too late? You would see the conditions just as they are, and that is the one hope we have in the face of this appalling catastrophe.”

*28th March, 1919.*

“ Since you were in Berlin conditions have undergone a great change. You would now find most of those with whom you then came in contact, crushed and even desperate. One cannot shut one’s eyes to the fact that all that was planned may come too late ; and, what is still worse, that those who hold the fate of the world in their hands have, so far, come to no decision that can avert the impending catastrophe. Perhaps it is now no longer possible to come to such a decision—possibly there is now

no longer any hope for Europe. One thing is certain, in the history of the terrible disaster of which we are on the brink, the work of your Commission will occupy the same unique prominence as that which the official British report on the conditions of factory workers, after the introduction of machinery, occupies in the history of Socialism.

“ But, alas ! one cannot blind oneself to the fact that the tragedy now upon us is a far more frightful one, one whose consequences will be much more terrible than Socialism ever dreamed of. For, in the meantime, the rationalistic ideas of Socialism have become impregnated with a sort of mystic glow of Asiatic hysteria, which has been nourished and allowed to develop undisturbed under the protective wing of the Paris Conference with its five months’ indecision as to what was necessary to save Europe.

“ I wish to speak definitely and firmly—and I do not doubt that you who know me will believe that I would speak not as a German, but, so far as it is possible, as a European, and that what I wish to speak of is no longer the past but the future only. From this standpoint I consider it my duty to say that the whole future of Europe—its traditional form—its established culture—is not only in the balance, but is already as good as lost.

“ I do not believe that the Peace question can now be solved. There has been eight to ten weeks too much delay. It is well known that in the months of March, April and May, the restless revolutionary feeling of all peoples is at its strongest. Now, owing to famine, unemployment and transport

difficulties, the nervous condition of our people is daily becoming more dangerous. Even eight weeks ago food would have saved us. Now it is too late. Now only an immediate peace, such as would enable Germany to continue an industrial existence, with the help of raw material and trade credit, can help us. Yet even were such a peace possible we can hardly believe the French Government would permit it to exist. It is because of this that I said before that the peace problem can no longer be solved as hitherto planned. It is too late—and this ‘too late’ is, perhaps, the most serious and fateful the world has ever known.

“I fear that, should some other solution of the problem not be found, the future development of our country and of the rest of Europe will be that arranged by the masses themselves. May we have the courage and faith to endure until such a time as the storm now breaking upon us comes to some kind of end.”

When at last the blockade was raised, a great breath of relief was wafted over the country. The situation was saved—for the time being. But already Bolshevism had broken out in several parts of the country and Government troops had to be called out to suppress it.

## CHAPTER IV

## A CHANGE OF OCCUPATION

IN February 1919 I returned to London. The final report had been submitted and was receiving attention, both in Paris and London. I found myself the object of a certain amount of interest. A first-hand account of Germany after five years' war, and after the bouleversement which had converted a stronghold of monarchy into a republic, was wanted by many in both official and other circles.

My mission, however, was formally at an end. I called at the War Office one day and took my farewell (as I then believed it to be) of the Director of Military Intelligence, Sir William Thwaites. I emerged sadly into Whitehall wondering what Fate might have in store for me. Fate was not going to leave me long in doubt. A sounding slap on the back woke me from my melancholy reverie. "By all that's wonderful," said Colonel Lance Wilson, a former instructor of mine, "I was just looking for you. I was going into the War Office to find out your whereabouts. General Sir Francis Bingham is selecting the staff of the Inter-Allied Commission of Control and wants you. Go and see him at once at the Ministry of Munitions."

I found General Bingham with his Chief Staff



Officer, Colonel Edgar Anstey, bending over a large map of Germany. This they were dividing into sections with a view of establishing centres for the control of disarmament. There was something grimly ironical in the fact that the man, who for years, under the Master General of Ordnance, had been responsible for the supply of munitions to the British forces should have been appointed to represent Great Britain in the work of depriving the enemy country of all the armament remaining to her at the cessation of hostilities. Those of us who worked with General Bingham during the subsequent five years know that no better choice could have been made. He was the personification of justness, and this the Germans soon realised and appreciated. He saw from the first the enormous difficulties which, consequent on the evil and involved internal conditions, beset the country, and how these affected the Government in their attempts to fulfil the terms of the Armistice and Peace Treaties.

"We've got to draw their teeth," he used to say, "but let us use a little local anesthetic when we can."

He was humane and understanding, and the Germans on more than one occasion privately, and in the Press, voiced their appreciation of the tact and consideration with which General Bingham, often in the face of opposition from his colleagues, carried out a stupendously difficult and delicate task.

My appointment to the Inter-Allied Commission of Control was one of the earliest, and in a few days I had exchanged the rank of a junior Captain for that of the most junior Lieutenant-Colonel. I had no idea that

greatness was thus to be thrust upon me, so when I was asked by telephone from the War Office one morning if I was "Colonel Stewart Roddie," I said, "No, there's no such person ; there's me, and I'm only a captain."

"Tut, tut," said my informant, "do try and keep abreast of the times. You've been a Lieutenant-Colonel for the last ten minutes. I thought I'd let you know."

The Inter-Allied Commission was not to come into operation for several months. Meantime I was to hold myself in readiness to act for the Ministry of Munitions. Obeying an S.O.S. from that Department one day, I reported to General Bingham, with whom I found Mr. W. T. Layton (now Sir Walter Layton), the economist, who was at that time giving his services to the Ministry.

Mr. Layton explained to me that a Commission had been appointed by the Ministry of Munitions to visit the shell works in Lorraine and in the Saar Valley, then in the occupation of the French authorities, and to report on industrial conditions generally in the areas evacuated by the Germans. I was to accompany this Commission as Military member. If I could not prevent difficulties being put in their way by the Germans I was to overcome them. This was work after my own heart, and I started from Hounslow for Cologne in a small military de Haviland.

Cologne, which had been like a city of the dead a few months previous, was now all brightness and gaiety, and to the casual observer appeared to be extremely

prosperous. Allied uniforms everywhere gave colour and smartness to the town. The shops, blazing with light, were flourishing on the business supplied by the Allied troops, to whom German marks—losing their value daily—were something to be got rid of as soon as they were received.

Opera, cabarets, café concerts, vaudeville performances, and, tucked away in darker corners, other forms of entertainment, offered a variety of distraction to the British Tommy and his officers. The prosperity was, however, only skin deep. The whole country was actually careering headlong to financial disaster, and to other evils which such disaster inevitably brings in its trail.

In the evacuated area of Belgium and France, which we had first to visit, evidence of the damage perpetrated by the Germans on the works was apparent everywhere. Enormous quantities of machinery had been broken up and melted as scrap to provide Germany with steel for munitions. Numbers of the most valuable modern machines had been sent to Germany. What remained had, in most cases, been destroyed before the evacuation in order that the works might not be in a position to compete seriously with Germany for a considerable period after peace had been concluded.

Luxemburg, that quaint and picturesque little Duchy, had been neutral, and the sword of the destroyer had spared it. Her neutrality had been violated, but only by the passing through of the Teuton troops. The story of the Grand Duchess (she was only eighteen then) who drew her car across the



THE DESTRUCTION OF RIFLES



road as a protest against the violation of the law of neutrality may have been a myth, but it was on the lips of every Luxemburger.

When the Kaiser was informed by the General Staff—from one of whom I heard the story—that the German Army was to traverse Luxemburg and that he must sign an order sanctioning this, he flatly refused.

“Luxemburg is neutral territory, and I’ll sign no such order.”

A few hours later, at two o’clock in the morning, the order was again placed before him.

“The Army is going to march through Luxemburg, your Majesty. It would be forming a dangerous precedent, and your Majesty might not care to feel in future that matters of importance were being engaged in without your official sanction being asked for.” His Majesty signed.

After the return of this Commission to England in the middle of May 1919, I was attached to the British Engineering Commission acting for the Department of Overseas Trade. This was composed of a Chairman—Sir W. S. Larke, Ministry of Munitions, eight representatives of the engineering industries, and myself, from the War Office. Our field of operations was this time to be German territory—the occupied zone.

In spite of the fact that this Commission was constituted in accordance with terms agreed upon by the Allies and Germany at the Armistice Conference, the work on which we were engaged was looked upon

by our ex-enemies as nothing less than espionage. They were obstructive up to a certain point, but more on the principle that such an attitude was alone compatible with their sense of injured dignity than in the hope of preventing anything that the Commission had set out to do. They never carried obstinacy to extremes, and, hard as it must have been for them to admit British experts into their secrets of manufacture and production, they submitted on the whole with good grace and resignation.

The Dom Hotel housed us while the Cologne area was being worked. Five motor cars were secured from the Army of Occupation, and during our one week's stay thirty-six works were visited.

In Wiesbaden one of our cars was stolen and found a day later, minus everything removable, in a lonely spot in the adjacent country. About a year later I was presented by the Rhine Army of Occupation with a staggering bill for the value of the missing parts. I returned it with a reference to the official account I had submitted of the matter at the time, and added that I was a Scotsman. The latter portion of the reply was probably more effective than the former, for I heard no more of the matter.

We visited in all seventy-nine factories around Mayence. I was satiated with machinery—textile machinery, chemical machinery, motor machinery, munition machinery. For me, without a spark of mechanical knowledge, intelligence or interest, the long days spent among the whirring wheels, and the unending dissertations on subjects of which I was profoundly ignorant, were inexpressibly tiring. But

my colleagues, with the help of the French authorities, were getting on well with the Germans.

One of our troubles, however, was the Department which arranged our transport. It was peculiarly niggardly in respect to spares. The effort to persuade them to supply a few extra tyres and tubes gradually wore me down, and I confess that I eventually threw up the sponge and, with my charges, departed disgracefully under-equipped. Even on the first day we spent considerable time repairing worn tyres, tinkering with old plugs and so forth. In Coblenz I made an attempt to make up our deficiencies from our supply store. No easy matter. Would I fill in a form? Of course I would—gladly. But they were *just* out of those particular forms. They would send to Cologne for them. Two days' delay only! I offered personal guarantees—payment—receipts. No good. I was up against conscience plus red tape, plus lack of imagination. An urgent long-distance call to Cologne eventually procured a minimum of the requisite articles.

A week later we had more trouble, but now we were in the area occupied by American troops. We had no claim on them, but that, I felt, was no reason why I should not try to get something for nothing. We rolled "limpingly" up to their transport depot one hot afternoon.

"Come on in, you son of a gun. . . . Say when. . . . C'm on . . . bring all those guys in. . . . Gee! what *are* you tourin' with? . . . Sit down. . . . Roudge ou blang? . . . What kin we do? Tyres? . . . Sure! Tubes? . . . Sure! Come on over



to the store. Help yourselves . . . loot the place. Sure that's all? Have another couple for luck. What'll the officer say? Gee! he'd have sumpin' to say if we didn't see you fixed. *Fill up a form?* Hear that, Gene? This guy wants to fill up a form. . . . Aw' baloney! Signature? Say, Mister, what's bitin' you, anyway? If we was collectin' autygraphs we'd sure be glad of yours. C'm on in. . . . Roudge ou blang? . . . Say when!"

Fine handsome hospitable fellows. Every contact we made with them was marked by their geniality, kindness, and an almost eager desire to be of help. They wanted neither thanks nor reward. On the contrary they made one feel that it was a privilege to help us. Unostentatious and unassuming.

Who, or what, ever gave rise to the widespread and false belief that the Americans are in the habit of bragging that *they* won the War? I have met Americans in almost every country of the world. I have travelled the United States from North to South and from East to West. I have always been treated with special consideration because I was a British officer, and I have never heard an American make one boastful reference—seldom, indeed, any reference—to the splendid services rendered to the Allies by the Americans in the War.

I mentioned the unpleasant *canard* one night in 1930 to Alice Duer Miller, the popular American author and playwright, and expressed a curiosity as to the source. We were sitting in 'the peaceful fountained courtyard of the Adlon after dinner. Alice blew a long slow stream of cigarette smoke

into the warm night air and said ruminatingly, "If it were an amusing tale one would naturally credit the Stock Exchange, where all—exciting—short stories are supposed to be manufactured. But as this one is merely unpleasant . . ." She blew a couple of smoke rings and watched them expand. "Tell me . . . don't you think perhaps the ground on which the seed fell was fertile? Don't you think . . . deep down . . . there *are* a great many people who rather like to . . . er . . . think that of us?"

While writing of Americans, I think I must record a strange and useful tribute paid to my nationality in odd circumstances in 1929. I was motoring in the Middle West of America, actually from Kansas City to Emporia to visit Mr. William Allan White, the newspaper magnate, who, I understand, made Presidents, or overthrew them, I forget which. Anyhow, he was a great man and a fine man. In the middle of the Kansas prairie (Brock Pemberton, of literary and Broadway fame, was with me) we ran out of petrol. I started out walking in search of a pump. I hailed several cars hoping for a lift, and wondered why they always went faster instead of stopping. I learned later that it had become a habit of "casuals" to beg lifts, murder and rob their benefactors, heave the bodies out and disappear with the cars. The practice of helping the hiker was therefore definitely on the wane.

Two miles I trudged in the sweltering August heat before I reached a petrol station. I turned wearily back, staggering under the weight of a couple of gallons. Determined to stop a car this time, I stood

in the middle of the road, arms outstretched, as a powerful limousine bore down on me. At the last moment I dodged it. I had caught a glimpse of two villainous-looking men on the driver seat, and decided that after all walking might be safer. But the car pulled up fifty yards on. I picked up my tin and hurried towards it.

Breathlessly I commenced my tale of woe. "Car stuck . . . out of petrol . . . kind of you to stop . . . want a lift."

My English might have been a foreign language to them. I tried again, introducing a horrible nasal effect which I hopefully imagined might pass as American. "Automobile busted . . . can of gas" ("kayhn of gayss" was what I called it) . . . gimme a ride," I panted.

"You's British?"

"Yep."

"Gee! de Goof's foreign."

They conferred for a few moments *sotto voce*. I caught the last word, ". . . chaynce it."

"Aw' right," said my inquisitor, "my bodyguard sez we'll take a chaynce on you."

"Bodyg—" I was peremptorily cut short.

"Step on it speedy, guy."

I opened the door—and for a moment stood petrified. But I had burnt my boats. I squeezed myself into the small available space. I was in a bootlegger's car, surrounded by bottles of whisky—hundreds of them. My feet rested on a couple of cases of gin and my "kayhn of gayss" was deposited on a keg of brandy.

Instantly all the tales I had heard of bootlegging gangsters resolved themselves into one awful reality.

I was being "taken for a ride." "I was going to be 'bumped off'." I pulled myself together. (Actually I was dithering with fear.) My rôle must be one of unsuspecting innocence.

"I'm really most awfully sorry to give you trouble," I began. Slowly the bodyguard turned to me a face that looked as if it had once been run over by a tank and stared ominously.

"*You . . . give . . . trouble?*"

I shrank back against the Cointreau and Grand Marnier.

"Good gracious, no! I'm trying to thank you."

Again they conferred. I gleaned nothing from their mutterings except the repeated word "British."

"You's *sure* you's British?"

I was about to cross my heart when the other broke in.

"Aw, shucks! Didn't you hear de guy trying to talk Yank."

My car appeared in sight. I called their attention to it. The driver "stepped on the gas" and at seventy miles an hour we passed Brock Pemberton standing astonished in the roadway. I gave up hope. "Bumped off. . . .!"

We stopped so suddenly that I thought the car had struck a rock.

"Beat it . . . quick," said the bodyguard. But I was already "beating it."

"Why didn't you stop where the car was?" I asked as I extricated myself from my alcoholic setting.

“ We take a chaynce with you—but we don’t take no chaynce with your automobile,” was the reply, which was cryptic to me until I reflected that they probably imagined I might be a decoy running them into an ambush by Government agents.

“ Good-bye—and thanks most awfully,” I said.

“ Aw, baloney ! ” said the bodyguard as they streaked away.

I rather like that expression now.

## CHAPTER V

## COLOURED TROOPS

IN June 1919 everything in my area was running well and smoothly, and I decided to take a day off. I wanted to know what was going on outside the occupied territory, over the border in that part of the land into which the blue of the Poilu and the khaki of the British Tommy had not yet penetrated. I studied the map. Darmstadt was not far off, and in Darmstadt sat, I knew, the son of an English Princess, the grandson of Queen Victoria, Ernst Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse, who, until the revolution a few months ago, had been a reigning prince. I would go and see the Grand Duke! We had mutual friends I knew. Would he receive me? I did not know, but I would give him the opportunity. The French authorities agreed to give me a pass out of their zone, provided I travelled in uniform. They also procured the necessary permission for me to enter the German zone—but only as a civilian. This was something of an impasse. From our Allies I learned that there was a neutral zone, a No Man's Land, of a few hundred yards between their line and German territory. In uniform I set out alone, driving the car myself. The French were employing black troops in that area. At the first outpost I was stopped by a couple of

Senegalese who squirted some guttural unintelligibility at me. I showed my passes. They looked at them upside down. I addressed them in every language of which I knew a smattering, and finally in one of my own which I reserve for special occasions such as this, but all to no purpose. Two of them stood with fixed bayonets on the running boards rummaging in the car. I pressed the accelerator and let the clutch in. A bayonet in the ribs made me change my mind. I got out, in a furious temper, walked with them a quarter of a mile to where I found a French N.C.O. washing his face. I got little sympathy from him. He turned a face flaked with dirty soapsuds to me and put the intelligent question :

“Why didn’t you speak to them in Senegalese?”

I returned to my car and drove into No Man’s Land. There was no one about. In the wood by the roadside, I changed into “mufti,” and, clad in a blue suit and grey Homburg hat, I passed unchallenged into Darmstadt. There I wrote a letter to H.R.H.:—

“You may think it unwise or you may not care to receive me, so that if there be no reply to this when I return in an hour’s time I shall quite understand.”

I took the letter to the Neues Palais where the Grand Duke lived. The big iron gates in front were closed, so I walked round the outer wall looking for an entrance. I found a small door which was opened to me by a kitchen wench, to whom I gave the letter. I then returned to the town in search of food.

A *rosbif*, which plunged me into doubt as to

whether it had not been reared in the stable rather than in the byre, was the only meat on the menu. I mentioned my suspicions to the waiter, whose comforting response was, "Lucky if it wasn't reared in the kennel."

After the meal I started out on a sightseeing expedition. The town was dead, only a few derelict-looking motor cars plying for hire on almost empty streets. The people I did see, however, looked healthier than those in Berlin. In a small town there was probably more opportunity of getting country produce, but the shops had little to offer.

And Darmstadt with its brilliant little Court, its first-rate opera, its small, but good society, had been such a delightful place in former days. The Grand Duke was himself an artist. He was a very capable musician, a good performer, and a still better critic and adviser. His knowledge of painting far surpassed that of the usual dilettante. He had encouraged art in every form, and Darmstadt, as an artistic and musical centre, had ranked with Munich and Dresden. Now it presented an appearance of desolation.

I returned to the postern gate in the Palace wall. As I reached to ring the bell the door opened, and a polite young man beckoned to me to enter. He led me to the library where the Grand Duke was waiting.

I had often in England heard of this "charming, handsome, versatile ruler," and the hours I spent with him that day convinced me that report had not belied him. He spoke in English—torrents of English—and at a speed which used up his own breath and took mine away. Every now and then his words tumbled



over each other. Then he would pull himself up and explain that his tongue was out of practice. He hadn't spoken a word of English for five years. But such fluency and such speed ! He wanted to know everything and darted several questions at me at once. Once he apologised for asking so much. " You see," he said, " I was practically brought up in kilts at Balmoral by Queen Victoria. What a darling she was, Grandmama. She may have been severe with her own children, but she was adorable to all of us grandchildren, and I—I could always get everything I wanted out of her." Through neutral countries he had heard now and again of his English relations, but always indirectly. Could I tell him how they were—what they looked like—how they had fared—or suffered ?

What had life been like in England during the War ? Had the civilian population suffered as in Germany ?

How was " So and so " ? Had the ghillies at Balmoral joined up ?

We talked of the War, its causes and its consequences, and I learned a little of the agony suffered by men who, impelled by duty to their Fatherland, had to do battle against a country almost as dear to them as their own.

The Grand Duke told me of his own life in the field and of the Revolution.

He explained that his abdication was necessary, at the time, for the country. Defiance would have meant more bloodshed, and, Heaven knew, there had been enough of that. They had allowed him to stay in his own home. They weren't bad, and doubtless

meant well. Often they came to him for advice and sometimes they took it. But what his future or his financial position were to be he hadn't a notion.

From Darmstadt, with considerable difficulty, I regained French occupied territory, again performing my quick-change act among the bushes of the neutral strip. The black troops were an infernal nuisance. I suppose the main object with which they were employed in these areas was the humiliation of the Germans. My experience—and I had more than enough—was that it was a barbarous and unworthy policy. These coloured troops should never have been in the position of controlling and humiliating white people. I narrowly escaped decapitation on the return journey. In order to hold up cars or individuals entering the French area, a couple of these dusky intellectuals had fastened a strong wire across the road about five feet high. It was impossible to see this in the fading light at a distance of more than twenty yards. I managed to pull up as the wire struck my wind screen. Had it been a little darker or had I been going faster, that wire would have met me on the wind-pipe. My indignation caused the blacks merriment. The complaint I lodged that evening at the French Headquarters, coupled with a few remarks on the results that must ensue from conditions which gave these blacks the opportunity of heaping indignities on us, was received with faint interest.

I was horrified, when on the following day, I visited the Castle of Friedrichshof—built by the late Empress Frederick to be for her “as a little corner of England,”

where she could end her days in peace, if not in happiness—to find the place over-run with black troops. The Castle was now the home of the Empress Frederick's youngest daughter, the ex-Kaiser's sister, Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse (Princess Margaret of Prussia).

Nothing will ever make me forget my first visit to Friedrichshof. The first sight I had of the beautifully situated castle gave no indication of the sinister conditions which prevailed within and around it. The gates were closed and locked.

Who was I? What did I want? asked a French soldier at the wicket gate. He supposed I was a newspaper man. No! I couldn't come in, he said. The wicket was banged in my face. I waited for a little while until he had disappeared, and then I whistled cautiously to an old German porter who sat in the lodge.

"Who are you?"

"A Swede," I told him.

"No! You can't come in. You must have a pass."

"Where can I get one?" I asked.

He shook his head doubtfully. "Perhaps in Paris," he said.

I took an envelope out of my pocket and showed him a large splash of red sealing wax which, in an inspired moment, I had applied that morning. That, of course, made a difference. My business evidently was of importance—*vide* the sealing wax—and after a furtive look round to make sure that the French N.C.O. was nowhere in view, he decided to risk it.

A key was produced, bars were withdrawn, and I was inside. We walked together up the drive, and, in reply to a multitude of questions, I gave him an entirely mythical account of the Scandinavian country I purported to hail from.

At a point where the drive branched in two, one path leading to the front courtyard, the other to the back premises, my guide stopped and thoughtfully looked me over. Was I to be admitted through the royal entrance or through the kitchen? My blue lounge suit and soft Homburg hat had suffered considerably owing to the odd usage they had had in the undergrowth of No Man's Land and from being generally bundled in the bottom of the car.

The old man, after a shamelessly appraising examination, finally made up his mind, and led me—to the kitchen entrance. Here I was given into the custody of an aged lackey, who took the letter I handed to him addressed to the Princess, and, shutting me in a pantry (in which there was no silver), he told me he would give my letter to the "chef."

"The chef!" I cried in amazement. "Why the chef?"

"Oh! The chef gets all letters from strange folk like you before her Royal Highness gets them."

"Here, you, come back," I called, but he had turned the key in the pantry door, and my letter was, I supposed, well on its way to the kitchen.

In a few minutes I was being politely greeted by a gentleman, obviously an ex-officer, who informed me that he was the "chef"—actually Master of the Household. "Chef," I discovered, was the equivalent

of the English "Chief," and had no connection with the reigning authority in the kitchen.

My letter, which had been delivered with the seal unbroken to her Royal Highness, brought an immediate response. I was ushered out of the pantry by my lackey friend, now profuse in his apologies for his previous lack of deference.

But, after all, he explained, how was he to be expected to know that I was a gentleman? I forgave him freely and comforted him with the assurance of my sympathetic understanding.

The chef then conducted me to the reception hall, where he left me alone to wait for her Royal Highness.

I walked to the large French windows. The green lawns; the blue sky; the golden sunshine; a few playful squirrels; half-a-dozen Senegalese throwing discarded fruit skins into the flower beds—so much only I saw, when my attention was attracted by a slight movement in the hall behind me.

Very slowly, hesitatingly almost, the Princess came down the broad stairway.

In her long, severe, black dress with little collar and cuffs of white lawn she made a picture of infinite sadness. I stood in the spacious hall waiting for her, this Princess of a deposed line, and found it hard to account for the seeming fading to sombreness of the afternoon summer light, and for the queer change in my own usually buoyant spirits to something akin to pity and pain. The face on which I looked was the face of a woman on whom suffering had written all too clearly.

"And you," she said in a soft low voice, as she gave

me her hand in greeting. "You are really from England? You will forgive me if I seem slow of speech. I have to become accustomed to your language again. I always spoke it with my beloved mother. It has always been a peculiar feeling—this curious sensation of belonging to two peoples. Almost all my life long I have gone every year with my family to England. I used to take my boys there for their holidays. Indeed we were in Eastbourne almost until the war broke out."

She showed me a photograph of her boys. Six little sailor-suited fair-haired atoms, looking like Raphael cherubs.

"Those two, and those two, are twins. Philipp and Wolfgang, Richard and Christopher."

"And the others?" I asked, pointing to the pictures of the two eldest.

But she seemed not to have heard me. After a moment's silence, she put the picture down and turned to the window.

"Come," she said, "I want you to see this view."

I followed and stood beside her, looking over the lovely stretch of plain that lay for ten miles between us and where, in the distance, the first few lights of the town of Frankfort were beginning to twinkle.

"My mother found this spot; it seemed to her a little like her beloved England, and here she built this home. Here it was that she asked to be buried, wrapped in the Union Jack, and it was my dear English Aunt Helena<sup>1</sup> who insisted that this wish should be gratified." She was silent again for a little.

<sup>1</sup> Princess Christian,

A burst of ribald French song struck offensively on the quietness around us. I stumbled an apology.

"Oh, that?" she said wanly. "I don't think I notice it any more. It is so long since we have known peace or quiet. One suffers—and just goes on suffering. . . . You said a moment ago that we all feel the same about war. Oh, believe me, we do not. If we did, there never would be war any more. We mothers . . ."

She did not continue, but asked me if I would take a short walk with her "just over there," to the old Castle of Cronberg. We went out on the terrace, down into the park, and over the road until we reached the portcullis gate of the old Keep. Into the courtyard over the cobbles, to a little door she led me. "Give me your hand," she whispered, "it's darker here." I followed her stumblingly up the rough-hewn steps and found myself standing beside the still, sad, black-robed woman in the chilly gloom of what appeared in the fading fitful light to be a small chapel.

Just in front of us was a long black shape, and by the side of it something similar, but lower. Gradually as my eyes accustomed themselves to the darkness I realised that I was gazing on a coffin, on which was draped the German Imperial flag. A helmet and a sword lay on it. By the side stretched a bier, prepared for another sad burden.

I turned with a sickening fear of understanding, asking with my eyes—for I couldn't speak—what it meant.

It was darker now. I knew she was praying. Presently she spoke to me, softly and slowly.

"You said war is the same to all of us—it is not. But ask any mother in England or France, who has sacrificed her two first-born sons, and she will tell you what war means to her and to me. *There* is the body of my eldest boy, sent back from the battlefield in Rumania, and that"—pointing to the empty bier—"is waiting for the body of my beloved second son, who died in France. I do not know where he is, but I come here and pray that some day he will be found and given back to me."

We went back in silence to the Castle. At the foot of the terrace steps I spoke to her.

"Your Royal Highness, I don't know how or when, but I am going to try and find your son for you."

She looked at me, wide-eyed and wonderingly.

"I have been asked to try and trace the graves of some of my own countrymen. Get me all the information you can about your boy. I shall try and find him and give him back to you."

I was destined to keep that promise.

I was, as I have said, horrified by the state of affairs at Friedrichshof. The whole place was in confusion and disorder. The Royal Family—and this, months after the Armistice—were treated like ticket-of-leave people. Should they wish to leave the grounds they had to proceed through a pathway, railed on either side with barbed wire. At the gates a book had to be signed. Her Royal Highness had to state where she was going, why, and for how long—and this to a *sous-officier*, a *poilu*, or a black.



Complaints of this treatment of an inoffensive family had already been made to the officer commanding the French troops at Wiesbaden. Her Royal Highness had asked that she might be treated at least like other German women, and left alone. She was told in reply that, as a sister of the ex-Kaiser, she should not, and need not, expect to be treated with any consideration whatsoever.

To me all this seemed so degrading and so unnecessary that I determined to try and do something to bring about a change for the better, and on my return to London I wrote the following letter in the hope that it would secure the sympathetic mediation of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson :

“ During my recent tour of duty in Germany the following matter impressed itself so strongly upon me that I venture to bring it before you in the hope that you may, should you deem it advisable, take some action regarding it.

“ The Castle of Friedrichshof, the home of H.R.H. Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse, lies within the territory now occupied by French troops. This castle was the private property of the late Empress Frederick—a Princess of Great Britain—and was left by her to her youngest daughter, who now occupies it. It is being used by the French as quarters for officers and other ranks. At present a number of coloured troops are quartered there.

“ I believe that the utterly erroneous belief exists that the castle is the property of the ex-Kaiser. I think, possibly, that, were it realised that the castle

was built by the late Empress to be to her a lasting memory of the England that she loved, that she planned it, watched it built stone for stone, saw it grow into the home that was to be for her 'a little piece of England in her adopted land,' that the contents of the house were her personal, private belongings—many of them mementos of England—and that she left all this to her youngest daughter to be kept and cared for, some special consideration could be asked for which under other circumstances might not be considered justified.

"The Princess to whom the castle now belongs is the devoted daughter of an Englishwoman. She is unhappy in greater measure than most women. As the sister of the ex-Kaiser her position in the new Republican Germany is an unenviable one. She mourns the loss of her two eldest sons, both killed in the War.

"It would be a gracious and generous act if the French would secure to Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse, in consideration of the facts which I have endeavoured to set forth, her uninterrupted occupation of Freidrichshof, and if they would arrange for the withdrawal of the troops.

"This would be a compliment to Great Britain, a generous and charitable consideration to a deeply suffering woman, and just one more of those acts of grace and gallantry which one associates so instinctively with France."

Days and weeks passed and I received no acknowledgment—not even a "Yours of the *n*th inst. to

hand." I was disappointed, but fortunately I had not given any indication at Friedrichshof of my intended action, so was happy in the knowledge that at least I had raised no false hopes.

Several weeks later I had to make a hurried visit to Frankfort in connection with the prospective arrival of the sub-section of the Disarmament Commission which was to be stationed there. I had a day to spare before catching a night connection for Berlin, whither I was bound from Paris on a third important and confidential mission.

I decided to pay another visit to Friedrichshof. Through the courtesy of the French officer commanding the troops of occupation in the town I was given the use of a car and provided with an escort who was to cope with any difficulties the coloured troops might cause.

I found the gates of Friedrichshof open and passed through this time unchallenged. I was amazed at the difference a few weeks had made. Gone was the barbed wire. Gone were the black troops. The grounds that, on my last visit, had been littered with garbage and choked with weeds were clean and trim. The only living things that greeted me on my way from the gates to the castle were two white peacocks. They were moving elegantly over the grass on which I had last seen black men peeling bananas.

My old friend who, on my former visit had locked me in the pantry, answered my ring and endeavoured by his attention to make me forget the past.

Her Royal Highness asked me, after the preliminary greetings were over, if I had noticed any change. I

said that the black troops had evidently been magically changed into two white peacocks.

"Something like that really did happen," she laughed. (Until then I had never even seen her smile.) "About ten days after you were here last, two French staff officers paid us a most courteous visit. They inspected the castle and grounds, and ordered the immediate evacuation by all troops.

I subsequently learned that Sir Henry Wilson had sent my letter to Field Marshal Foch, who lost no time in taking action on it.

"I think sometimes it must have been a miracle," said the Princess.

The Engineering Commission had completed its task, my colleagues wanted to return via the battlefield, and one morning at precisely 1 a.m. we arrived in Arras. Tired and sleepy, we trudged the torn streets looking for shelter. "Beds for nine people? Impossible." The cars had been sent back, and we were now dependent on a precarious railway service. Two hours later a British officer found us foot-sore and hungry, sitting among the ruins of Arras Cathedral.

I wish I could remember who he was, for I owe him much. He told us that three miles away at Morceuil there was a little camp of iron huts. If we walked there he would give us beds of a kind and nourishment. Together we set out, each carrying a valise. They were almost broken, those middle-aged City gentlemen, by the time we found the little arches of corrugated iron, but they bore up wonderfully and I think they all, as they sank gratefully on to the army

blankets (spread in some cases on the bare ground) felt for the first time something of the reality of what life had been only a few months previously in that very spot and in those same huts.

We rose late to find buckets of clean fresh water laid out for us. Breakfast followed. How our host did it I don't know, but there they were, ten wonderful breakfasts : tea, bread, bacon, sausage, eggs, marmalade.

We found a transport company near, and by flaunting the red and gold of my Staff uniform I succeeded in persuading the C.O., not without some misgiving, to lend us three cars. Into these my charges were packed and, having taken leave of our host, on whom we pressed nine hearty individual invitations, we set out for the Vimy Ridge and the desolation of Lens, where scarcely two stones stood one upon the other. To me there was something weird and unnatural in this battle-ground from which war had passed. No whirring of bombing planes, no rattle of machine guns, no "whiz-bangs." Only the unearthly silence and ruin.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADVENTURE

WITH the members of the Engineering Commission I returned to London in June, but several preliminary arrangements for the arrival of the Disarmament Commission in Germany had to be made, and I was hustled with little warning to Paris one day to await certain instructions. If omens meant anything that mission ought to have been doomed to failure. The first aeroplane in which I was to fly turned turtle on the ground before taking off, and smashed her propeller. While I was 4,000 feet up, in the next machine, over the Channel, a piece of iron-casing blew off the engine. We turned and came down in the Lympne Aerodrome. Reaching Paris after dark we found ourselves in a dense fog with little spare petrol. In the nick of time we found St. Cyr and landed successfully.

The British Peace Delegation was then housed in the Hotel Majestic in Paris. There was a ball that evening, and as one looked on that scene of gaiety, elegance and prosperity, it was impossible not to think of the other side of the picture: a derelict, desperate people across the Rhine, crying "The blockade! Oh, God! raise the blockade."

I spoke with General Sir William Thwaites, Head of

the Intelligence Department of the War Office that night, also to Sir William Goode and Mr. Maynard Keynes, whose book, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, subsequently did so much to open the eyes of the world to the truth, and was read in Germany with as much reverence and hope as was the Bible in former times. Next morning I left for the German capital.

In Berlin, in the meantime, a mission for the repatriation of British prisoners in Germany had been several weeks in operation. General Sir Neill Malcolm was in charge. Immediately on my arrival I went to see him and told him that I had an important piece of work to do, which, owing to the delicacy of its nature (it had nothing to do with Secret Service, a Service with which I have never come in contact), it was essential I should keep private. Would he procure me passes for any part of Germany, furnish me with a powerful car and a trustworthy and strong chauffeur?

General Malcolm listened to me in silence, and then asked :

“ Are you the man who was here as a Captain some months ago on a mission ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Then how is it you are now wearing the uniform of a Lieutenant-Colonel ? ”

I told him the story of my promotion and of my appointment to the Inter-Allied Commission of Control.

“ I see ! Well, supposing our positions were re-

versed and I came to you and made such an unusual request without offering you any evidence that I was justified in making it, what would you do ? ”

“ Turn it down, sir, unconditionally.”

“ Good,” said the General, reaching for a bell. “ It’s turned down.”

“ Wait a moment, please ? ” I begged. “ I have just come from Paris. I have a letter here. I would prefer not to show it to you, but if I do so you will give me what I have asked for. Won’t you reconsider your decision without asking for the letter ? ”

The General looked hard at me, leaning back in his chair and tapping his teeth with a pencil. He seemed to be wondering if he had a lunatic or a mountebank to deal with. His sojourn in Berlin had brought him frequently into contact with both.

Finally he took the letter, read it, replaced it in the envelope without a word, and handed it back to me. For a few moments he looked at me in silence—then he rang a bell.

“ Breen,” he said to the Major who reported, “ take this officer and make all the arrangements for him that he wants.”

General Malcolm was a man of quick decisions and few words. On one occasion a certain officer, whose verbosity considerably exceeded his activity, was recounting floridly and fatuously some quite valueless piece of work to which he was giving a fictitious importance.

“ And now, sir,” he added, “ is there anything further I can do for you ? ”



“ Yes. Would you look up the first train that has a connection for England ? ”

“ Certainly. Anything further while I’m at it, sir ? ”

“ Yes—catch it.” And he did.

A few hours after my interview with the General I was seated in a powerful, ugly-looking Benz. I had been warned that the Government passes might not prove effective outside Prussia. The Northern districts by Kiel and Lübeck, so rumour had it, were still over-run by Communists and remnants of the Red Army. The stories one heard in Berlin were very disquietening. Fritz, the chauffeur, who was twice my size, assured me confidently that he was prepared to deal with any emergency which might arise. He was very proud of having been entrusted with me, and spent the first few hours in evolving and explaining a series of defence schemes with which we were to meet any system of attack.

As each of Fritz’s plans ended with my bulwarking myself behind *his* dead body and subsequently returning to Berlin with a last message to a certain Marie-Josephine, they became not quite so terrifying to me as they at first sounded. The possibility of the dead body being mine either never entered into his calculations, or else he was one of those who are born tactful.

Fritz’s instructions were to deposit me at the earliest moment, with such speed as was compatible with moderate safety, at a certain seaport on the shores of the Baltic. He seemed to me to be more concerned with the speed than the safety.

When we arrived and I had recovered the power of speech and limb, I asked Fritz what his "bag" for the day had been.

"Two dogs, four geese, three chickens, one goat, two 'humans'—Oh! yes, and another chicken."

We had stopped for the "humans," who fortunately had been more frightened than hurt, having been bowled over only by the wind of the car.

We had one adventure en route. Nearing Lübeck, and having changed behind a haystack into my old blue suit, I was halted by three ruffianly-looking characters with rifles and red bands, who searched the car.

"Who are you?"

"A commercial traveller."

"What line?"

"Carpets."

"Where bound for?"

"Sweden."

We were just about to go on when one of the "Reds" lifted the rug in which my uniform was wrapped, and scattered the tell-tale garments before our eyes. Fritz's hands immediately went above his head. (Alas, my poor bulwark!)

"Don't mess these things about, please," I said to the one man who had not seized me. "It's a Russian uniform, and I paid a lot of money for it as a souvenir. We haven't got any in Sweden."

The crude bluff succeeded. The uniform was examined with interest.

Wouldn't I give them something as a souvenir?

I cut off three tunic buttons and departed with their

"*Gute Reise*" ringing in my ears. Once out of sight I stopped.

"This, Fritz, is where you and I have a large neat brandy."

After his second glass, Fritz explained that his *Kamarade* attitude had only been part of a ruse. Actually he was going to fool them, and at the critical moment, land two of the "Reds" with a right and left, and plant a boot in the stomach of the third.

To what extent Fritz's ruse would have developed under the influence of a third glass of "Martell" was never learned.

I replaced the stopper in the flask.

## CHAPTER VII

### ON THE SHORES OF THE BALTIC

IT was late and already dark when we arrived at Warnemunde. I asked if the harbour master had seen or heard of any yacht arriving from Sweden. He hadn't. Bitterly disappointed and fearing I had failed—I had been too late, or that the yacht, which was the object of my quest, had sunk or changed her destination—I found an hotel, and feeling that I could not close an eye for sheer chagrin, I went to bed and slept like a log until the following morning.

The harbour could be seen from my bedroom window. No yacht had entered during the night. Fritz came in while I was breakfasting by the open window and handed me my field glasses which he had found in the car. They were a magnificent pair of Zeiss's best, presented to me by the Engineering Commission, and well did they do their first job of work for me. I turned them in the direction of Sweden.

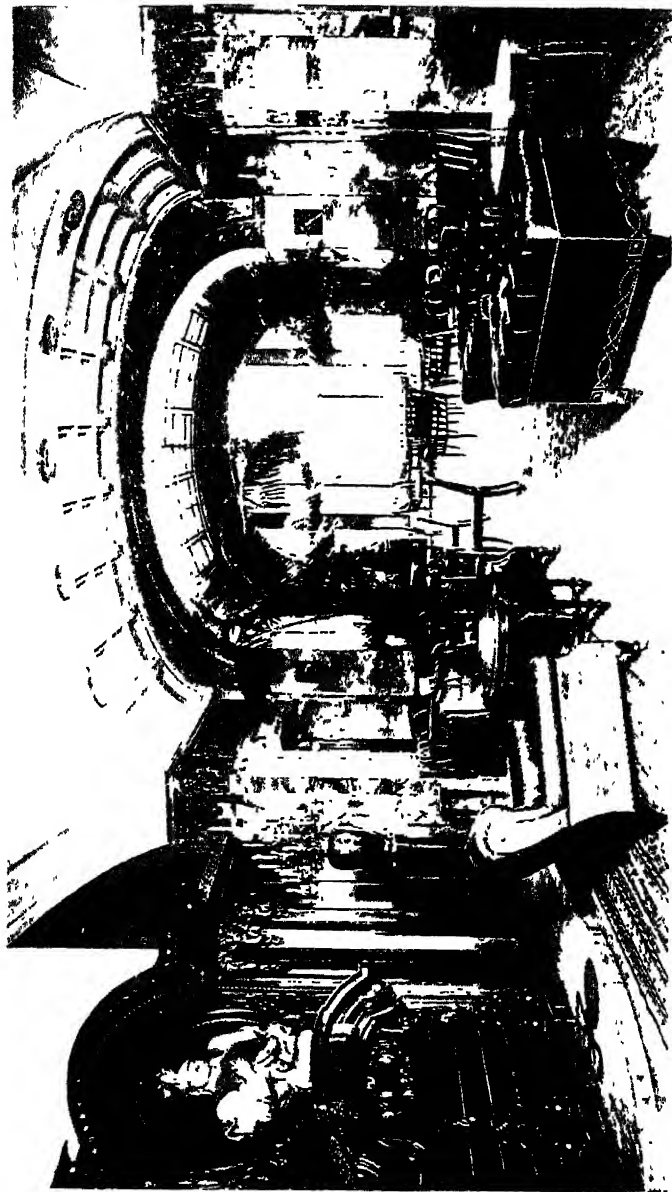
There was the "Waterlily," like a little snowflake being wafted softly, silently, but surely towards us, out of the blue. I went down to the beach near the harbour and waited for her to anchor. Fritz took my letter on board. A lady came on deck, leaned on the rails and looked at me. She was joined by a

distinguished-looking man in a yachting coat and cap, who focussed a small telescope on me. They conferred a moment together, and then disappeared down the hatchway. In a few minutes Fritz came back with a note.

An hour later I was in the little white and gold cabin of the "Waterlily," lunching off savoury fried steak and onions, pancakes and Swedish beer. I decided, finding my hosts to be most delightful and charming people, to spend that day and night in the locality. We dined together, their Highnesses and myself, on the crowded terrace of a popular beach hotel. It was the last place in the world where one would have expected to be recognised, so it was with some astonishment that during the fish course I saw my host bow a greeting to someone sitting not far off. The greeting, however, appeared frozen at birth, for my friend subsided abruptly, with a look of annoyance, into his chair.

I turned with some curiosity and saw glaring at us—a fork full of macaroni arrested half way towards its goal—the florid face of Prince Eitel Fritz of Prussia. His expression conveyed violent disapprobation, which I mistakenly took to be directed against myself. Next day, however, I learned that he had written a singularly offensive letter to my companion and his wife on the subject of German Princes insulting their country by flaunting themselves publicly with British officers.

Which just goes to show how stupid it is to jump to conclusions, for at that particular moment the object of Prince Eitel Fritz's vitriolic regard was working as



THE HALL OF THE ADLON HOTEL, BERLIN

With the bust of the Kaiser, passed off by Herr Adlon to the rioters as that of Lohengrin



earnestly in the interests of his country as I was in the interests of mine—and that was, judging by appearances, more than could be said of the scion of the House of Hohenzollern.

The return journey to Berlin was accomplished in peace and comfort. Once when Fritz, quite unnecessarily, killed an unoffending hen, he excused himself on the grounds that life in the trenches had made him callous.

In Berlin there were food riots, and the hotels were happy hunting grounds for the mob. Into the hall of the Adlon they forced their way, overturning the tables. They did not appear very desperate, and the whole thing seemed to be more a romp than a riot. An ornate life-size bust of the ex-Kaiser in cuirass and eagle helmet, built into a niche in the wall, caught the mob's roving eye. Instantly there were cries of "Down with it! Away with it!" and a general rush was made in its direction. But before the hand of the vandal reached it there rose up in front, poised on a chair, the splendid figure of old Adlon, with his flowing white hair. With a gesture of his hand and a toss of his leonine head, he silenced the crowd of rag-tag and bobtail.

"*Kinder, Kinder,*" he spoke chidingly like an affectionate parent to them, "*Was habt Ihr nur gegen den Lohengrin?*" ("Children—what possible grievance can you have against Lohengrin?").

"*Ach! der Lohengrin is' es? Na! dass ist 'was anderes!*" ("Oh! it's old Lohengrin—well, of course that's different!").



So they smashed a chandelier instead and departed, and to this day there remains intact in the Adlon hall a pleasant piece of sculpture, which is pointed out as representing "His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor William II," or "The celebrated Wagnerian hero, Lohengrin," according to the guide's estimate of the guests' political convictions.

## CHAPTER VIII

## “ERSATZ” AND THE UNDERWORLD

JUNE 1919 was nearly at an end, and as I had still a few days to spare before I was due to report to General Bingham in Paris. I decided to remain in Berlin and look around. It would be interesting to compare conditions with those which had existed six months ago. I discarded my uniform and wandered in the evenings through those parts of the capital to which, strictly speaking, duty did not necessarily lead.

The Jäger Strasse and Alexander Platz still offered the waters of Lethe to those who desired to forget the past and were, for the moment, unwilling to contemplate the future. In the countless “Lokals” in these districts *danses macabres* were nightly, hysterically and wantonly held. I visited them under police escort one night. Sordid, indeed, they were.

Berlin had never been like this in the old days. How had it come to this now?

The officer of my escort explained it to me. Brought up from birth to believe in the infallibility of the military “thing”; lured to ruin through five years of suffering and horror by the assurance of ultimate victory and the spoils of war; lied to and urged on, the people had at last discovered that the vision of

approaching glory, freedom and prosperity that had extended before them was no more substantial than a mirage.

In the west end, beneath more gaudy trappings, it was the same : no social standard, no moral standard ; no Kaiser, no court, no officers ; nothing that counted—nothing to live up to.

“ A president who is a saddler,” folk said, “ Pouf ! he is only *ersatz* ” (fake).

Everything was *ersatz*. *Ersatz* wines, *ersatz* beer, *ersatz* bread, *ersatz* clothing.

One could not help feeling that some gaunt and sinister *Ersatz* pervaded everything. Even the spirits of the people were as surely *ersatz* as their miserable bodies appeared to be.

“ *Mir is alles Wurscht—wir sind ja nur Ersatz* ” (“ Who cares ? We’re all only fake ”).

This from a lady who sat on the counter of the bar and kicked over a table as she said it. Her friend picked up the splinters of glass and wiped the spilt liquor from his *ersatz* papier-maché trousers and just muttered hopelessly :

“ *’s mir auch Schnuppe—’s alles nur Ersatz.* ”

Another time I had taken the precaution of informing police headquarters of my intention to wander still further off the beaten track, and again they obligingly offered, or rather insisted, on providing me with an escort. .

Five of them turned up to fetch me in the evening—dressed as men about town, but unmistakably *echte Berliner Polizei* (real Berlin Police). They were captained by a well-known detective inspector named

Albert. We dined in a low haunt near the Alexander Platz, and moved on to other sordid spots. Thieves' kitchens, dope dens, brothels—I need not describe them. My escort was invariably recognised, but the inspector's assurance that they were not there officially at once dispelled any uneasiness.

We finished up in an underground room beneath one of the largest cafés in the Friedrich Strasse, which was the “ social ” centre of the criminal fraternity. Here the outcasts had their own society—such as it was. They behaved decently, dressed decently, danced decently—urged by some moral instinct to cling to some appearance of respectability.

We stumbled down a dark wooden staircase. Albert sent for someone before we went in and told him the visit was unofficial. We then waited for one minute and entered a long, smoke-obscured, dimly-lighted low room, crowded with men and women. We were met by a roar of welcome. They bore no grudge against police off duty. We ate good sausages and drank beer. I danced with a lady who asked me if I had been in prison.

“ I can see,” she said, with a nod in the direction of my escort, “ that you're not one of *them*.”

“ I would rather not talk about it,” I said, looking around fearfully.

“ *I* understand,” she whispered, squeezing my hand in sympathy.

“ That's all these poor devils have in the form of society,” said Albert, when we came out into the welcome fresh air. “ And a lot of them would sink deeper and quicker without it.”

My next visit to the "Underworld" was in the spring of this year, 1932, after a dinner given by the exclusive "Yachting Club of Heligoland." One of my fellow guests asked me if I would care to visit the criminals' ball being held that night. He had two invitation cards. Somewhat bewildered I read the gilt-lettered bidding to the Festival of the Steadfast.

"Give me time to go back and change," I said.

"Quite unnecessary," he assured me. "There will be four thousand taking part, and three thousand will be in evening kit."

At midnight we motored out to one of the suburbs, and on the way my companion explained.

The criminals, outcast from ordinary society, had about a dozen years ago, founded a Society of their own and called it the "Steadfast." Members paid a small subscription. The Society buried those who died destitute, and looked after the wives and families of such members as might be temporarily removed from the sphere of their labours. Twice annually a ball was given, admission to which was a definite recognition of social distinction. To be debarred was to lose one's last clutch at "respectability." The necessity for something representing decency and order was strong, even among "outcasts." At these balls everything was above suspicion—except the members.

We were there by the time he had told me this. My hat was taken by a blithe octogenarian damsel who said, with a knowing wink, "I hope you enjoy yourself. It's more fun here than *some* places we both know, eh?"

I winked in return.

A couple of severe-looking gentlemen in immaculate evening dress scrutinised our invitations, asked for the name of the member who had vouched for us, released the catch of a turnstile and passed us through. The member—a bar-tender from a questionable haunt in Neu Köln—was paged, and in due course appeared and conducted us into an immense hall. Serried rows of white clothed tables were ranged around a large dancing space. A brass, woodwind and string orchestra was playing “Wein, Weib und Gesang.” We manœuvred our way through the dancers to the principal table, where places had been reserved for us.

My host explained the rules and told me what an enormous moral effect the Society had had. “Helps us all to retain our self-respect.”

I ventured to suggest that an organisation of 4,000 criminals might be a terrible danger in the world.

“It depends on what they are organised for,” he said. “We are organised for the social welfare of the criminal classes and not for crime. We are a power, I admit, but a power for good. Look at that table—all boys under 21. Not one of those would have been here but for the Treaty of Versailles, and the ruin it has brought upon this country. But they have been driven to theft and forgery in order to keep their mothers from starvation or their sisters off the streets.”

I asked him what was the aggregate number of years’ imprisonment represented there that night.

“I suppose it would reach back to the beginning of A.D.,” I said.

"Let's see," he said, thoughtfully reckoning, "I've done five." He counted rapidly the revellers at a couple of adjacent tables. "Five—three—one—ten—three. Take an average of three for the room, and don't include the guests, nor the police—say nine thousand years in all. That'll take you back a long time before A.D."

"Are the police here?"

"Oh, yes! perhaps fifty of them. We don't object. They only come to see the familiar faces, and satisfy themselves as to who are in Berlin. There is no crime here, only criminals; but no criminal who is wanted at the moment. You are safer here than in any other place to-night."

The organ boomed out the chorale, "This is the day God made." The dancers seated themselves. The room was hushed. Six large photographs of members who had died during the past year were unveiled on the platform. A male voice choir of two dozen of the fraternity gave an excellent rendering of several "Requiem" numbers. The audience was hushed to reverent silence. Tears flowed copiously. The band struck up again. Ten bashful males stood in a row. Each in turn was eulogised by the chairman for work done for the Society, and each was presented with a gold watch. I saw the watches. They were magnificent. (I couldn't help wondering where they had come from.) The chairman then read expressions of regret from those who had hoped to be present but had been "unavoidably detained."

In his speech he welcomed the guests, "including those who are here uninvited" (the Police). "We

trust that they will overlook the fact that cards were not sent to them,” he said, “ and that in future when they may have to deal with us officially they will do so in the same spirit of generosity and consideration as that in which we have received them here this evening ! ”

My *vis-à-vis*, an elegant person with a backless velvet gown, asked me to dance. She took me to a vendor of “ Tombola ” tickets. I could win anything from a button to a grand piano. To our mutual excitement I drew a number. I had won half a sow. It was presented to me, skinned, on a board. I carried it in some perplexity back to the ball.

“ What on earth am I to do with it ? I can’t face the night porter of the Adlon bearing half the body of a pig back with me.”

“ Give it to me,” said the lady with the backless velvet gown, and who looked as if she had just walked out of the Ritz. “ Believe me, Baby, I can use it ! ”



## CHAPTER IX

## DISARMING A NATION

ON August 4th, 1914, a military train crowded with cheering enthusiastic troops left Berlin labelled "Nach Paris—à Paris." It never reached its destination.

But, on September 12th, 1919, a train labelled "à Berlin," and bearing seventy officers of five different nationalities, left Paris, and three days later arrived in the German capital.

This was the advance section of the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control, appointed by the Treaty of Versailles to carry out the naval, military and air clauses of that Treaty.

We were detrained at the Zoological Gardens station, not because the Germans possessed a malicious sense of humour, but because they wished to avoid the unfriendly demonstration which would undoubtedly have taken place had such unwelcome visitors arrived at the central station where we were expected.

Naturally we were unpopular. The Germans had to house us, provide all travelling facilities, furnish office accommodation and pay our allowances ; but, beyond staring at us rather stupidly and apathetically in the streets, they took little notice of us. The staffs of the

British and French sections were allotted comfortable quarters in the Adlon.

General Bingham had a regal suite on the fourth floor, and one of his first adventures is worth recounting. Thefts and burglary were rife at that time in Berlin. One morning it was discovered that General Bingham's suite and those adjoining had been ransacked. A pearl necklace belonging to the wife of an American journalist had been taken from one apartment ; General Bingham's sole loss was a box of cigars and a revolver. The Press notice, which appeared in both German and English papers, reported all articles as having been taken from a table by the General's bedside. Even the General regarded the inexactitude as of minor importance until he received a telegram from Lady Bingham, who was gifted with a keen sense of humour, and who was still in England, with the portentous question, " Whose was that necklace ? "

The first plenary meeting in February 1920 with the Germans was remarkable only because of the unexpected nature of the proceedings. When General Nollet, the Chief of the whole Inter-Allied Commission, entered the conference room of the War Office, accompanied by the chiefs of the various sections and their staffs, it was found that the German representatives were already there, and that their Chief, General von Cramon, had assumed the rôle of chairman.

General von Cramon, who had been German liaison officer with the Austrian Headquarters Staff during the war, was a very tall, formidable-looking

person. He rose to receive the Commission and, bowing impressively to the short and harmless-looking French General, said, "I rise to open this meeting." General Nollet immediately became taller and less harmless-looking.

"I think you make a mistake, sir! *I* open the meeting." Across the table the two rows of delegates glared at each other, tense and expectant.

"Here on German territory—" began the German General, when he was able to think of something to say.

"I am here in control on German territory, and in that capacity it is for me to undertake the direction of this meeting," said General Nollet.

"I cannot accept that," said General von Cramon.

"Then, good-bye," said General Nollet, reaching across the table and shaking von Cramon heartily by the hand.

Nollet was right and von Cramon was wrong. The Allies were imposing terms and the Germans accepting them. After wasting several days it was arranged that the Delegations should enter the room simultaneously. But this ridiculous performance, resembling the entry of a male chorus from both wings at the same moment, would have required a stage manager to time it, and it never took place. No subsequent plenary meeting was ever held. It was arranged that in future the Sub-Commissions should meet and make their own arrangements. Official communication between the "chiefs" was from then on to be on paper and not *viva voce*.

Short and formal as it was, that first meeting was the beginning of something which was without precedent

in the history of the world—the disarmament of a nation by that nation itself under the control of a handful of foreign officers.

For, it must not be forgotten, it was the Germans who had to disarm their own country; it was the Germans who had to collect from their own organisations, from their own individuals, all the arms of the country, and who were to deliver them to us.

It was the Germans who had, under the supervision of French, Belgian, Japanese, Italian and British officers, completely and utterly to destroy that military strength on which the Germans had wagered the whole welfare and nearly the whole existence of their nation.

When at the next meeting the “Blue Book” with the scheme for disarmament was handed to the Germans, and the few conventional speeches which accompanied the handing over of the instructions for disarmament were being made, every individual in the room realised that never in the world’s history had a conquering nation to administer a cup of such inconceivable bitterness as the Germans had to drain to the dregs that cold, bleak morning. It was the moment more than all others at which they must have realised what defeat meant. They were to be stripped—utterly stripped, in spirit as well as in deed, of all that could possibly make them a menace—for years to come—to the peace of the world.

The bitterness of those who were accepting, on behalf of sixty-odd million human beings, such appalling humiliation was not a pleasant thing to witness or to feel, and it was with a sensation of relief

that one quitted them, with their white strained faces, contemplating the ashes of all the hopes, ambitions and desires with which the heart of that nation had so proudly and arrogantly beat five years previously.

“We had always imagined that there would be many opportunities for evasion,” one of the German experts told me, “but when we got that ‘Blue Book’ we realised that a net had been woven round us in which there wasn’t even a dropped loop.”

Almost every eventuality had been foreseen and provided for. Sub-sections of the Armament Commission of Control were established in eleven districts—formerly the centres of the German Army Corps. Each sub-section, called a District Committee, under the central control in Berlin, superintended the disarmament in its district. In this way the entire country was covered and controlled.

It was a comparatively simple matter to deal with official stores of arms, but with the vast quantities that were scattered over the whole land, in possession of individuals, families, works, unions, clubs and factories, it was a different proposition. The haunting fear of a recurrence of civil war was still strong, and no one wished to be caught napping or unarmed. The Republicans, Monarchists and Spartacists were still in fear of one another, and each had quantities of arms from which they had no intention of being parted. The Government offered pleas, bribes; issued orders and threats. Finally they offered to pay for all arms delivered up by a certain date, and rewards were offered to persons giving information

leading to the recovery of concealed weapons. Many of the informers had a certain delicacy regarding selling such information to their own people, so they came to the Control Commission and asked to be given the same terms offered by their own people. As the Allies did not propose to make any secret payments, the German Commissary for Disarmament, Dr. Peters, was asked if, in order to assist the German Government to carry out the disarmament terms, he would agree that the Control Commission should pay for information on the same terms offered by the Germans, and that all such expenditure be reimbursed. This was agreed, and streams of informers found their way to the Inter-Allied offices on the Potsdamer Platz.

Ninety per cent. of these were impostors who thought they had found a source of easy money. These all wanted "something down" before they parted with any information. Sometimes they said they had to have sufficient to bribe others.

The most outrageous of these mountebanks were amusing actors. They would close the door breathlessly, tiptoe to the window, peer fearfully into the street, and ask in a trembling whisper if they could be overheard.

"No advance payment" usually put a quick end to such interviews. Numerous "agents provocateurs" with a desire to learn our methods bestowed their attention on us. But their ways were crude, and they seldom imposed upon us.

The genuine informer was paid the amounts agreed upon with the Commissary, but a system of terrorism

started and the informer seldom had an opportunity of enjoying the fruits of his labour.

Sometimes he would be found afterwards—when the flies drew one's attention to the body.

Often it was members of the secret police who in their course of duty reported the discovery of concealed stores of war material, and who were, therefore, murdered. We never knew who were responsible for these removals, nor, indeed, was it our business.

The German attitude was, that while there was no wish that arms should be concealed—indeed, as I have said, rewards were offered for their discovery—the spirit which prompted the betrayal to the Entente, for filthy lucre, of those whose misguided patriotism or exaggerated belief in their own danger accounted for unlawful possession of arms or munitions, was as degrading and undesirable in time of peace as it was in time of war, and one which was quite firmly to be discouraged. Such informers as were not “removed,” were later tried in open court and sentenced to varying terms of hard labour.

I was told one day that a “Herr Müller,” with very important information, wished to speak to me. My first thought on sighting “Herr Müller” was one of regret that I was not armed. He had been pointed out to me once before and his face was one that was not easily forgotten. He proceeded to tell me a cock-and-bull story of stores of arms. He had seen them himself, and for a certain consideration would say where they were.

“When did you see them?” I asked.

“Oh! about ten days ago.”

“Müller,” I said, or rather “X,” calling him by his

real name, "until two days ago you were being tried for the murder of your fiancée, whom you were said to have strangled and robbed. You were released only on a verdict of non-proven. Now will you explain to me how it came to pass that you were in a position ten days ago to see those stores of arms?"

No pantomime demon ever made a speedier exit than did "X." I never saw or heard of him again.

The concealment of arms never caused the Commission much difficulty or anxiety. The Monarchists told us where the Republicans and Spartacists had hidden material, and vice versa. The Germans gave themselves away all the time. Consequently, despite the numerous scares raised by the Inter-Allied Press on the subject of "concealed arms," the question never became a serious issue. One of the most important discoveries was at a factory at Rockstro, near Dresden, where over 200 new gun barrels were found concealed behind a false wall. But there was no warlike significance about this. The proprietors wanted the valuable steel and decided to hide it and keep it for future use. A workman who had helped to build the fake wall gave it away. He was paid a small amount for the information, and I believe he is still in prison—if alive.

In the barracks various finds were made. Sometimes it was a workman with pacifist ideas who gave the hiding place away; sometimes it was a soldier with a grievance. False roofs, false floors, false walls often hid numbers of rifles and machine-guns.

"That's a very fresh and suspicious-looking patch in the roof," remarked the Allied officer conducting



a search one day in a "Caserne" in South Germany.

"Ah yes, the damp," said the Herr Major.

"Extraordinary sense of mathematical precision that damp seems to have. We'll make a hole there and have a look."

"Never," said the Herr Major, in horrified indignation, "would I have believed that a British officer could stoop so low as to look through a hole in the roof."

Nevertheless the low fellow looked, and a supply of machine-guns was duly confiscated and destroyed.

Such finds were frequently used against the Government—who were perfectly innocent—by the Allied Press, and increased the internal difficulties of Germany by inciting the Communist and Monarchist parties against each other. Every fresh discovery was given an importance, outside the country, entirely out of proportion to its real significance.

"Germany re-arming." "Germany preparing for a new war." "Germany's Secret Army," was the sort of nonsense we were continually reading in the Allied Press.

Germany was, as a matter of fact, a huge dis-integrated mass. A dozen parties with a dozen different aims. Each wanted to be the saviour of the nation, but each in its own way, and few with any intention of helping the other. Arms were not concealed with any view of recommencing war. But Bolshevism had to be guarded against. There was fear of a Polish invasion. And there was still another inducement. Big prices were being offered by foreign purchasers for war material. Nothing paid

so well as to smuggle rifles, machine-guns and equipment out of the country.

A strange case was that of the S.S. "Rosandra," lying at Swinemunde, flying the Italian flag, and said to be loading illicit war material from barges. Certain of our Allies showed a singular lack of interest in the matter, but General Bingham decided that no one was going to get away with anything if he could help it. So with assistance from the naval department a search was carried out. The "Rosandra" was innocent of even an illicit revolver. But she was fitted with a complete workshop for aircraft. The Captain frankly told us that he was being paid £100 per day, and that he was fitting the ship with cabins for a number of German officers: he was to make three journeys to Turkish waters. He had taken no war material aboard.

The ship's workshop was dismantled and she was allowed to sail. Some days later she was stopped in Danish waters and two dozen disappointed German aviators were disembarked and sent home. The Treaty forbade German officers leaving their country to serve in other armies.

Now at that time Turkey was fighting Greece.

When we examined the "Rosandra," papers were discovered proving that the enterprise had not been financed by the Germans—or the Turks—or the Greeks.

And that is where this story had better stop!

Information reached us later that large loads of arms had been thrown into the river Oder from barges when it was discovered that the ship was under suspicion.

## CHAPTER X

## THE EHRENBURG

IN November 1919 I had change of occupation. I became housing agent in advance for the main personnel of the Commission which was to arrive in the following January. Dresden was my first objective. Here the Saxon sub-Commission was to be installed. There was no need to hurry—and who ever wanted to hurry through Dresden?

When the arrangements for accommodation had been completed—the German committee had made things very pleasant and easy—I moved on to Weimar. Here the National Assembly had sat and the republican constitution had been drawn up. The town, famous as the home of Goethe, had now another claim to be remembered in the history of the world.

Eisenbach came next, and under the shadow of the Wartburg, while I munched a homely luncheon of black bread, sausage and beer, I indulged in sentimental memories of the days long gone by when from the “gods” of the Dresden Opera House I used to hear the incomparable Theresa Malten sing “Dich teure Halle grüss’ ich wieder.”

I was motoring and all this country was new to me.

The days were short, and I did not drive after dark. I spent the nights in any comfortable-looking inn.

I was not in uniform and attracted no attention. It was interesting to sit and listen to free interchange of opinion and argument amongst the country folk who crowded these inns in the evening. The impression one gathered was that Saxony and Thuringia were less in favour of Monarchy than were the other parts of the country. There was a good deal more of unconcealed Communism here.

I was on my way to Coburg. Snow had fallen and the roads through the beautiful Thuringian forests were difficult and treacherous. If I had known into what perils my choice of unknown second-class roads—those through the forests—was to have led me, I should have given the route more consideration. The car had to be dug out of snow drifts ; it slid sideways and backwards down hillsides ; it bumped into trees—and bumped off again. Providence and luck were with me and eventually, with nothing worse than a shattered nervous system, I descended from unknown heights to the peaceful plain in which rests the town of Coburg.

The prince who reigned over this romantic country is an Englishman born. He is the only son of the fourth son of Queen Victoria (the late Duke of Albany), and the brother of our own Princess Alice, who married Queen Mary's brother, the Earl of Athlone.

Before I left London, his mother, the Duchess of Albany, had asked me to call on him should I have the opportunity. I seized the present occasion to do so.

The Ehrenburg, the castle to which I drove, stood, a gloomy, depressing-looking monster pile, in the

centre of the town. Inside the "atmosphere" changed. The rooms I was taken to were comfortable and homely, and my reception by Colonel von Schack, one of the Grand Duke's gentlemen, was warm and kindly. His Royal Highness was not living in the Ehrenburg, but in the Callenberg, a large old-fashioned villa outside the town. I was at the window as he drove into the inner courtyard of the Ehrenburg. He arrived unattended, in a "Victoria" drawn by two fat little grey ponies—a young man still in the thirties, grey and pathetically thin. On two crutches, and with the aid of an old retainer, who hurried to help him, he got out of the carriage.

At the age of fifteen he had exchanged the happy, care-free existence of an English public schoolboy for the narrow rigid formality of a German court, and the change must have been a trying one. His love of England did not tend to make him popular in his new surroundings, and his frank preference for his English friends caused much jealousy. His marriage to a German Princess eased things to a certain extent, but when the War broke out he was often referred to as "the Englishman," and even his own regiment was not sure of his whole-hearted acceptance of the German cause, for he was still Honorary Colonel of The Seaforth Highlanders.

"Why," I asked him, when I found him that day racked with illness in the shipwrecked country of his adoption, isolated from the friends of his birth and boyhood, "why, when caring for England as you did, did you send that telegram home at the beginning of the War? You were Honorary Colonel of one of the

finest British regiments, and you telegraphed saying you were ashamed of having worn a British uniform."

The Grand Duke sunk his head upon his hands, and when he had sufficiently overcome his emotion, he whispered, "That telegram. Oh, that telegram. Listen. I was an Englishman who had become a German. They knew I wasn't really one, and they would not believe that I was utterly loyal. They mistrusted me without cause. When I accepted the Dukedom of Coburg I accepted all the obligations that went with it. Germany was now my country. But they knew what England still meant to me, and in order to disabuse the army of any suspicion of wavering loyalty on my part I was given that telegram to sign. It served its purpose and, if that be justification, my personal sufferings must not be allowed to matter. But no one will, or ever can, know what that cost me. Here—my country ; here—wife and children. There—the country that *was* mine ; there—my mother, my sister, friends I loved and the relations I had grown up with. Look at me," standing and supporting his pain-wrung frame on two sticks, "do you think it is only the trenches that have done this to me ?"

He had paid the price—heavily—this English boy. He sat there that day ruined. All the fabulous wealth of the Coburgs, all his palaces, all his vast properties confiscated. A house the revolutionaries had left him, with scarcely sufficient money to nourish his wife and five little children. (But later on some of her property was returned to him.)

## CHAPTER XI

### PEACE TERMS

BY the end of December 1919 all arrangements for beginning the real business of disarmament had been made, as well as for the arrival and housing of the main body of the Inter-Allied Commission. General Bingham had personally supervised all the British appointments with the result that a very sound selection had been made.

Until the Treaty was ratified no work was supposed to be undertaken. But the Germans were anxious to resume as soon as possible peace-time production in some of the factories which had been converted for the manufacture of war material. They approached the Commission and asked that the powder factory of Troisdorf, near Cologne, should be dealt with then and there. As no less than seven thousand factories had to be controlled—some completely destroyed, some partially, and the remainder converted to their pre-war condition—General Nollet agreed, realising that a preliminary try-out would be useful in determining the methods to be generally adopted in the future.

So Troisdorf was taken in hand, inspected, re-converted and given the free certificate entitling it to resume its pre-war functions.

This isolated case occupied only a few of the personnel of the Commission, and as it was unnecessary for the others to remain idle in Berlin, leave was freely granted.

It was good, after many months, to be in England again! To be able to free oneself of the horrible feeling of being disliked, unwelcome and resented. I had made my permanent home in London at the charming house on the Embankment belonging to Julia Marchioness of Tweeddale. Princess Christian dined there the night after my return.

Princess Christian, the third daughter of Queen Victoria, was, after the Empress Frederick, the outstanding personality among the daughters of the great Queen. She was the common centre round which the most affectionate thoughts and feelings of the wide circle of royal relatives, not only in England but abroad, revolved. "Aunt Helena" was an expression one never heard except in tones of love and reverence. She had a heart of gold, and, what was almost as precious, she had a divine sense of humour. During one of the worst air raids, she told us, she was sitting knitting, bombs exploding unpleasantly near. She had given instructions that the servants, who had gone to bed, were to go to safer quarters in the basement.

"I heard very peculiar sounds of distress from the back staircase," she said. "I went to see what was wrong, and saw the new cook, who was so fat—oh, so very fat—being assisted in a hysterical condition downstairs *backwards*, by the butler and the footman. It was only when I went nearer and saw that in her



hurry she had donned an indispensable garment *back to the front* that I understood the peculiar mode of progression." Her Royal Highness then returned to her knitting. A few minutes later a bomb burst in the hall and blew it to ruins.

"Really," sighed Princess Christian entirely unperturbed, to her daughter, Princess Helena Victoria, "these Germans are becoming very tiresome!"

One of the unfortunate results of anti-German propaganda in this country was the unhappy position in which British subjects who had married Germans, even those who had become naturalised, were placed. Princess Christian and the Duchess of Albany—the latter a German Princess who had married Queen Victoria's fourth son—both of whom were indefatigable in their work for the British Red Cross and other Institutions concerned with the alleviation of suffering of the British soldier—were subjected to frequent insult. I do not think, having enquired searchingly into the matter, that this kind of persecution was indulged in in Germany. Many English women there were allowed to continue in their employment unmolested, during the whole War. Here, the Prime Minister himself was suspected of harbouring a foreign spy in the shape of a poor harmless governess in his house. Prince Louis of Battenberg lost his job, and the Navy a capable admiral. The whole Royal family changed its name. Even dachshunds had to disappear. It is to be doubted whether any cause gained by it. The crowning piece of tomfoolery indulged in by England, and that at a time when there was not even the plea of war hysteria to excuse it, was the cry of

“Try the Kaiser !” It was worse than silly because it had very dangerous repercussions in Germany. There they might speak as they liked of the ex-Emperor, but to allow him to be tried by their former enemies was unthinkable, and nothing could have gone further to restore him to favour. The monarchists were not slow to take advantage of this. As sympathy for the ex-ruler grew daily stronger, the position of the Government, at no time too secure, became more precarious.

The situation was clearly reported to England, but still the cry continued. I was having luncheon one day at a house in Grosvenor Square. Princess Beatrice and one of His Majesty's Ministers were there. I explained the position which was being created in Germany and was amazed to hear the Minister reply, “The Kaiser will stand in the dock within a year. I myself have already read part of the case for the prosecution.”

Later, after the Treaty had been ratified, I wrote on this question to Lord Rosebery, who replied simply, “I suppose the whole business is due to the platform utterances of irresponsible Ministers, and it all forms part of the disastrous Treaty.”

## CHAPTER XII

### THE FIRST MONTHS

THE Peace Terms had been made public in June 1919, but the Treaty was not ratified until January 1920. In Germany they were received with horror and indignation.

The view throughout Germany was that the Government had been compelled, at the point of the pistol, to accept impossible terms. Her colonies had been taken ; her richest industrial areas had been sold into bondage for at least fifteen years—perhaps for ever. Reparation on an incredible scale was demanded. The army was to be reduced to 100,000 men, not sufficient to police the country in time of peace, and quite inadequate to cope with the dangerous conditions which Bolshevism, starvation and other evils had made prevalent. Bohemia and the Baltic States were independent Republics ! Alsace-Lorraine was gone ! And, to crown all, the insufferable insult of being forced to agree—although convinced that the agreement would never be enforced—to hand over the Kaiser and nearly one thousand of their prominent men to the Allies to be tried for war crimes—to be imprisoned, perhaps executed.

If the peace terms were not all that the Germans believed them, they could scarcely be described as a

“Judgment of Solomon.” Wise and far-sighted men in both France and England read them with misgiving. Lord Rosebery wrote to me just after the Treaty was signed :

“Certainly the problem before the people who concluded the Peace was an arduous one, but I scarcely think they could have made a greater hash of it.”

He had always seen the futility of the demand for extradition, and in February 1920 he wrote again :

“How could our plenipotentiaries have believed that the Prussians would give up their guilty officers except with a pistol at their heads. It was not natural to expect it.”

He recognised, too, that it was not only futile, but inexpedient, and did not mince his words. A year later he referred to “the madness of demanding the surrender of these German officers.” By April Lord Rosebery was able to write :

“You will have observed that the equally half-baked attempt to bring the Emperor William to trial in London has completely died out of our energetic Press, evidently on Government inspiration. I am glad that we have heard the last of it.”

Someone—I forget who—said that the peace should never have been made by the men who made the War. The subject to be studied was such an utterly different one that only statesmen whose mentality was unaffected by jealousies, disappointments, acquisition, victory and glory, ought to have

been engaged upon it. The greatest mistake of all was that so much time had been allowed to elapse between the end of the War and the ratification of the Treaty—a year and two months.

“The whole mischief,” wrote Lord Rosebery, “arises from the irreparable delay after the Armistice, when we dawdled into disaster.”

The right moment for the passing of the Allied verdict upon Germany had long passed. Germany had had time to sit in judgment upon herself and her former leaders, and had decided that the worst she and they could possibly have been charged with was manslaughter—and that was not admitted—and here she was “accused, found guilty of, and punished for murder and robbery with violence.”

“Do you remember,” Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German representative to whom the Peace Terms were first handed, said to me some years afterwards, “that England and France accused me of deliberate insult because I remained seated when at Versailles.” His trembling finger shook in front of my face as he continued bitterly. “They couldn’t see—those noble adversaries—they couldn’t feel—those conquering heroes—that they had sapped my body of its strength just as they were sapping the life-blood of my country. I could not stand, I could not move. They had paralysed me, had shocked the life from my body. Only my heart and my brain were alive. With the pistol at my head I regained control of my speech, and I delivered my country and my people into penal servitude rather than deliver them to death. And you—you could only see the insolent Boche who

remained seated while addressing the Conference. You—with your superior knowledge of human nature—with ‘ your wonderful psychological insight ’ and—*those others ! My God !* ”

By the end of 1919 it was beginning to be believed that the worst of the crisis had passed. The Republican Government had toiled unceasingly combating internal disorder. That a body of men, so inexperienced and so new to the intricacies and responsibilities of government, should have been able to keep the reins in their hands and to control to the extent they had so great a diversity of aim and action, must always remain worthy of commendation and respect.

To the memory of the first President of the German Republic the head of every patriotic German should bow in gratitude. How President Ebert managed in those first years to prevent a general collapse must remain a mystery to those who did not know the man himself. Government succeeded government, and had there been anyone at the helm less broad-minded than this bourgeois ex-soldier, Germany must inevitably have fallen on still more evil days.

The President was respected. No glamour shone on his position. But in those days people had learned to distrust glamour : it had blinded them and deceived them into a war that had brought them no good. There was nothing romantic about his personal appearance. A short, squat, thickly-made man, a broad plain face with shrewd, beady eyes that twinkled with honest good humour. He was not much of a conversationalist, but I shall ever recall

the pride with which the first words I ever heard him speak, moved me. It was in the Holtzendorff house in the Victoria Strasse ; the question of extradition of " War Criminals " was being discussed, and Noske, the Minister of Defence, put to me the embarrassing query, " Tell us what you English would have done if we Germans had won the War and demanded of you the surrender for trial as criminals of your King George, your Prince of Wales, your Field Marshal Haig, etc. Tell us—would you have let us have them ? "

Then the President, who had been quietly listening, laid his hand on my arm and said, " Don't answer that question, Colonel, it's not a fair one—just take it for granted that we know."

Of course they knew. There was not one of them who doubted for a moment how we should have met such a demand. And why should we have expected any other answer from them ?

Only once again did I meet that kindly, simple man. He dined with the Ambassador and Lady D'Abernon one night some years later. There was music after dinner and when the applause, which followed the first numbers, had died down, it was seen that the poor tired President was fast asleep. Lady D'Abernon, who sat by him, wakened him gently, told him the concert was over—it will be forgiven her—and sent him home. It was his last party ; the life-machine was worn out. He went home—and died.

Gessler, Minister for Reconstruction in the earlier days, and later Minister for Defence was a distinctly

sympathetic person. As a Minister for War he would possibly not have shone, but in the less martial capacity of Minister for Defence (into which office the former had resolved itself) his quiet, unassuming personality fitted admirably. He was appreciative of the advantages which might accrue from unofficial discussion, and came once or twice to tea with General Bingham. But he always brought one of the Staff—an *officier de carrière* of the old school with him. The duty of this *aide* was evidently to answer all questions of a military nature which General Bingham might put to the Minister. This grew to be rather tiresome, and even General Bingham's noted good temper became ruffled.

"I had hoped, Herr Minister, when I looked forward to this visit, that I should have had the pleasure of conversing with *you*!" he said politely but pointedly. I thereupon invited the thwarted *aide* to play draughts with me in another corner of the room, but he rose and reminded the Minister of what I supposed (perhaps erroneously) to have been a quite fictitious appointment.

Gessler was the soul of honour. In his first interview with General Nollet he said :

"I shall probably say polite things to you, General, and I may do things that are pleasing to you, but you will, of course, understand that I do so in the belief that my country will thereby benefit."

The fact that the masses in general paid little attention during the early days to the "butcher and the baker" who had made the republican constitution,



was all to the advantage of the new Government, who were thereby enabled to do a lot of solid ground work without publicity. Gradually healthier signs manifested themselves. The people were being fed, not well, it is true, but the spectre of starvation had disappeared. The hysterical state had passed and saner views were prevailing. The peace terms threatened to bring about a complete relapse. "A government that would sell its people to slavery must go," was the general cry. But the Government knew that they could not refuse. They could only hold out the hope that in time the Allies would see the futility of demanding the impossible and would be persuaded in their own interests to modify their demands on a basis of practicability.

The Inter-Allied Commission arrived in Germany in January 1920, and Control started in earnest. The lot of the Allied officers in Berlin at this time could not be a happy one, but the wonder was it was not more unhappy.

On more than one occasion we were informed by anonymous letters that the plans for our massacre were perfected. General Bingham was to be removed painlessly by the simple means of cyanide of potassium, which was, we were informed, to be sprinkled on his pillow. More picturesque, if more gruesome methods, were to be adopted in dealing with his Latin colleagues. There were a few days during which things were, frankly, uncomfortable, but there never was any real danger. The death of a French N.C.O. had cost the German Government £50,000.

A British General would be rated much higher. It paid better to keep us alive.

There was little social distraction in those early days. Diplomatic relations had not been resumed ; the British Embassy—which later, under the D'Abernon régime, was the centre of a brilliant hospitality—was empty. In the earlier months after the War it had housed the Red Cross Canteen.

I was sitting at dinner in the Esplanade Hotel one winter night with Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, when a perspiring policeman rushed into the dining-room calling out that the British Embassy was burning and the Fire Brigade insisted on a British officer being present. The inference one gathered was that a burnt sacrifice was to be offered up ! I happened to be the only British officer present, and, with the Prince, I got into a car with the messenger of ill-tidings. We arrived on the outskirts of a crowd surrounding the Embassy which was belching smoke from the upper storey. We got through the crowd, who cheered lustily at the prospect of this further addition of British fuel to the flames. The authorities, on being called to the fire, had found some doors locked and were afraid to break them open except in the presence of a British officer, for fear of being charged later with appropriating documents. Naturally there were no papers of any significance there. We broke open the doors, liberating a black cat and her kittens. The fire was soon subdued, and, much to the disappointment of the expectant multitude, I emerged in no worse condition than that to which I was reduced by the glass ceiling of the hall falling on me simultaneously

with the stream from a hose, which a fireman, succumbing to a temptation with which a sense of humour made me sympathise, turned on me as I left the building.

Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, who came with me to the fire, was the surviving son of Princess Christian. While still in his youth, shortly after having spent his happy schooldays at Charterhouse, he was fated to become heir to the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein (brother of the late ex-Empress of Germany), and to a very considerable inheritance. This necessitated his becoming a German subject. He lived at Potsdam, was a close friend of the Kaiser, and loved nothing better than spending half his life in England with his family and friends, golfing and shooting. He was a first-class golfer and an enthusiastic member of the Sunningdale Club. Nothing hurt him more than when he heard, after the War, that his name had been removed from the list of captains.

He was one of those unfortunates whom the War tore in two. All the habits, customs and manners which he had assimilated in Germany had not lessened a natural love for England. But, like the Duke of Coburg, he had taken all his adopted country could give him, and, when war broke out, it was his turn to give. There was no question as to where his duty lay ; he was a German. The Kaiser readily agreed to his request that he should never be asked to fight against England. Many similar requests were made to the ex-Emperor by others who had relations in England, and were in every case granted. The two sons of Prince Münster, of Maresfield, in Surrey, are

cases in point. Princess Münster was a Scotch woman, born Lady Muriel Hay, a daughter of the Earl of Kinnoull. The two boys, educated and brought up in England, suddenly found themselves, while still in their teens, called upon to fight England. It just could not be done. Princess Münster and her two sons told the Emperor how they felt, and met with the most sympathetic understanding. The elder was detailed to look after British prisoners, and many of these speak gratefully of his work among them. The other son was never sent opposite the British lines.

Prince Albert, when I met him first, was in very low water. The Prussian State pension which he had always had up to the time of the Revolution had been stopped. Private income he had none. The Duke, from whom he was to inherit, disliked him because he was an Englishman, and because he stood directly in the line of succession before the Crown Prince, who was the Duke's own nephew. Consequently there was nothing to be expected from Uncle Ernst Günther until such time as that gentleman was gathered to his fathers.

I only met Duke Ernst Günther himself once, but that was prefaced by an odd incident in which my batman played a prominent part. The Duke, having arranged to see me at a certain hour, I had sent my man to his apartment in the Esplanade Hotel to ask if H.R.H. was ready to receive me. The Duke mistook my hard-bitten Scotch groom for me, and, without giving him an opportunity to explain himself, shook him by the hand, gave him a cigarette, put him in an easy chair, and started at once a fluent discourse

in English on private and intimate family matters. "He just took my breath away," said the embarrassed lad, when he came back. "There he stood, a great, big, white-bearded, fine-looking man, tellin' me about Prince This and Princess That, and all their troubles, an' never stoppin' to give me a chance of gettin' a word in edge-wise; callin' me 'Colonel' all the time, too. At last, although I knew it was rude to interrupt, I broke in wi' 'Stop talkin'.' Never did I see a man so taken aback. You would ha' thocht nae one had ever told him to be quiet before. Before he recovered, I went on, 'I'm not the Colonel. Ye might ha' known that by my clo'es.'"

"'And why,' says he tae me, 'did ye not tell me that sooner?'"

"'I've been trying to,' says I, 'for the last five minutes, but ye never gave me a chance.'"

"Then he gave me a han'ful o' cigarettes and a hundred marks—of course it's only really threppence—and sent me back. He did na' shake hands wi' me when I was comin' oot—only when I was goin' in. Class distinction, I suppose!"

The Duke was a tall good-looking man with very pleasant manners. He spoke a great deal, and with much affection, about his sister, the ex-Empress, and with interest—and considerably less affection—of his English relations. He was frank about his intentions towards Prince Albert. He wasn't going to give him a shilling. "Prince Albert would probably only give it to his servants," he said. He, the Duke, had nearer relatives who were German, and they had to be looked after. I pointed out delicately that, as he

was a wealthy childless man, it seemed unreasonable that he should permit his heir to exist in a state bordering on poverty. He did eventually say that he would not allow Prince Albert to starve, and then politely but firmly turned the conversation into other channels.

Poor Prince Albert ! He used to take home the bread and butter and cake—products of the British canteen—that remained after tea, to give to his servants. In those days no food was ever wasted. In the dining room of the Adlon it was quite usual to see the guests wrap up the pieces of meat that remained on their plates and carry them away.

## CHAPTER XIII

## A MEMORY OF CAPTAIN FRYATT

"I'VE brought you here with an object," Prince Albert said to me one day, as we reached the door of Toepfer's small restaurant in the Dorotheen Strasse.

"I hope your object and my desire go hand in hand," I responded, looking at my watch, which said 1 p.m., and sniffing an unmistakable Hungarian Goulash.

"Eventually—yes, but not primarily," said his Highness.

The rubicund proprietor hurried forward and whispered :

"Not here, sir, upstairs, if you please. The gentleman is already there. I'll see that you are not disturbed."

On the first landing, having indicated a door, he left us, and I looked at the Prince for an explanation. He had asked me to lunch with him and I was unprepared for anything mysterious.

"I'm going to ask you to meet an old Prussian officer," he told me, "a Colonel von Büttlar-Brandenfels. The poor old devil is nearly off his head with worry. I've known him for years and I want to help him if I can, and the only way I can see is to

let him tell you his story. Perhaps you can comfort him a bit. As far as I can make out he——” The door behind the Prince had opened and I saw a white-bearded old gentleman looking nervously at us.

“I heard someone talking, your Highness, and I just looked out to see if——”

He was evidently agitated, and I wondered what had happened to disorganise so thoroughly this nice-looking old fellow.

There was a bottle of red wine on a wooden table in an alcove of the small darkened room. With a trembling hand the old man poured out three glasses. We performed the usual courtesies, and then, my curiosity being thoroughly aroused, I asked, “Now just what is all this about?”

The old man looked at Prince Albert, who nodded.

From an inner pocket Colonel von Büttlar-Brandenfels produced some papers. He handed me a three-quarter column cutting from the *Times*—the report of a memorial service held at St. Paul’s Cathedral for Captain Fryatt, shortly after his execution by the Germans.

“Read that,” he snapped nervously. “No—not all of it, just the bit about me.” His shaking hands adjusted his glasses.

“Here—there it is—the lies—the calumny. A Büttlar-Brandenfels! Read it, read it,” he hissed.

“The names of the chief criminals are known . . . von Schroeder, who passed the death sentence, and von Büttlar-Brandenfels—(‘That’s me, that’s me,’ broke in the Colonel in a fever of excitement)—who hurried on the execution, cigar in mouth and with



his dog at his heels, can hardly be inclined to smile if they survive . . .”

“That’s it ; that’s the part,” said the trembling old man. “That’s what they’ve written about me—they’ve made the name Büttlar-Brandenfels a byword for cruelty. Mein Gott ! A Büttlar-Brandenfels ! Listen,” he went on, “Can’t you see it ? The cigar and the dog ! The ingeniousness of the writer ! An early cigar ; a stroll with the dog ; an execution ; all in the morning’s work ; one thing as trivial as the other ! The jaunty, airy callousness of the picture ! But the truth—here is the truth——”

I stopped him. “I really cannot see, Colonel, what I can do in the matter. If you wish to publish a *démenti*, hadn’t you better see the *Times* representative ?”

“I have no desire to publish a *démenti*,” he said, with scorn, “I merely wish, as a Prussian officer, to have the satisfaction of telling the truth to a British officer. I am suffering under this calumny, Colonel, and I shall suffer less if you will hear my story.”

I turned to Prince Albert, shrugging my shoulders helplessly. What on earth could *I* do ?

“Just listen to him and let him talk,” said the Prince in English. “His nerves are all upset, and he’s really a nice old chap. I’ll go down and order lunch. It will be easier for him if I’m not here.”

“This is how it was,” the old man went on eagerly, as soon as the door had closed. “I was Military Governor of Bruges. I was responsible, among other things, for all executions. Not for the sentence ! It was my duty merely to see that the

sentence of the court was properly and decently carried out. I received instructions that Captain Fryatt was to be executed at 7 a.m. on a certain day. That morning, shortly after six, I went to the prison to superintend the arrangements. I inspected the firing party, went through the drill, satisfied myself that the officer in charge of the firing party was acquainted with the exact procedure, and then, thankful that it was not part of my duty to witness the actual shooting, I turned to leave the prison. It is true that my dog—just a little terrier—was with me, but I swear to you that there was no cigar in my mouth—this I can prove—for I never smoke cigars ! Well, just as I was leaving, a car with Captain Fryatt and the chaplain drove up ten—minutes—too—soon ! I thought how awful it would be for him to have to stand for ten whole minutes looking at the firing party. So I went back to the officer in charge and told him to get it over as quickly as possible. Perhaps it was all over a few minutes before seven, but what could I have done ? What *could* I have done ? ”

I was thinking—“ You could have talked to him ; you could have asked *him* if there was nothing you could do—you could have given him a few more minutes of God’s good air—you could . . . ”

I think the old man read my thoughts. “ Wouldn’t anything that was kind or sympathetic only have made it harder,” he asked me. “ I wish I knew—I *wish* I knew ! But read that paragraph again. “ Von Büttlar-Brandenfels with a cigar in his mouth and his dog at his heels ! . . . ”

I took my leave of him. He was trembling still and there were tears in his eyes. I told him that some day I would tell his version of the story. I doubt if he heard me. He was standing, looking into space and repeating to himself with a mixture of horror and amazement, "Mein Gott ! Ein Büttlar-Brandenfels !"

I never saw him again, but Prince Albert told me a few days after the interview that he was like a new man since he had told me the story. "Completely altered !"

"But the condition of Captain Fryatt," I said, "remains unchanged."

## CHAPTER XIV

## GENERAL VON KLUCK

IT was one day in the Autumn of 1919 that I received an invitation to meet General von Kluck. And I accepted without hesitation. The soldier, who had commanded the First Army on the Marne in September 1914, had on that occasion played a leading rôle in the tragic drama of Germany's destiny. The whole significance of the Battle of the Marne was never made known to the German people until after the War. If anything did leak out earlier it was merely a rumour to the effect that the G.H.Q. had voluntarily withdrawn the right wing in order to prepare for future successful operations.

The whole plan on which that campaign had been fought—the plan that was to take Paris—depended on that right wing. And it had been withdrawn !

Surely old von Schlieffen, the veteran who had thought it, dreamed it, worked it out—and died, leaving it the accepted, undisputed tactic to those who carried on, must have turned in his grave and groaned.

It was to meet the man who had commanded the First Army of this right wing that I was bidden to luncheon.

This was the first occasion on which I had come unofficially in contact with any of the military personages in Germany, and, as I entered the room and

found half-a-dozen German gentlemen, ranged with almost barrack-room precision in front of the sofa, I had a sudden uncomfortable feeling of not knowing what to do. Should I offer to shake hands, or should I merely click my heels and bow? The former meant risking a rebuff; the latter might create the impression that I was administering one.

General von Kluck, whom I saw for the first time, must have been a fine-looking man in uniform, but in the ill-fitting ceremonial black frock coat which he was wearing he did not look his best. Indeed he seemed to be entirely out of place in civilian clothes. He was amazingly young-looking. He must have been seventy five, but, dark-haired, ruddy-complexioned and bright-eyed, he might have passed for fifty.

I looked at him—and liked him. He was looking straight into my eyes, and I could have sworn there was a twinkle in his.

I held out my hand. “Your Excellency, I am glad to——” And then I stopped, for von Kluck had taken one step back and raised his hand as if in protest. I stared at the man, and felt my face redden with annoyance. Had I made a mistake? I had felt myself in the position of being able to afford to be generous, and now—this!

I was not left long in suspense, for after a suffocating silence—though it must have only been a momentary one—von Kluck spoke in an astonishing *basso profundo*, that rolled round and enveloped one, that filled the room, that must have lost itself only after it had flooded through the open windows and reverberated through the Tiergarten.

"Colonel, there is one thing I wish to say to you before I take your hand. It is something which I always intended to say to the first British officer I met after the War. *In the whole history of the world, there is, in my opinion, no military feat which has excelled, and few which have equalled, that accomplished by the first British Army in this last War. My admiration for that Army is greater than I can express.* And now"—and there was a twinkle in his eye as he held his hand out to me—"I am very glad to meet you."

That was only the first time out of many during the next few years that I had the privilege of hearing General von Kluck talk on military matters, and I was glad to read in a letter he wrote to me just before my departure from Germany that : "It has always been a satisfaction to me to discuss with you the strategical problems of the Great War, free from the prejudice which biassed so many soldiers of the romance races. Only in this way can any sound basis for historical research be laid."

He often spoke with admiration of Lord Haig. "Now, there's a man I would like to fight my battles over again with before I die. I believe he and I could find a good deal to interest each other. We had him with us for six months once, attached to the German Army. Everyone who knew him liked him. Our trouble is that *we taught him too much.*"

I repeated this to Lord Haig, who said that he would willingly meet General von Kluck and could think of no more valuable way of adding to the lessons of war than by former adversaries comparing notes.

The meeting never took place. General von

Kluck, after the Battle of the Marne, was relieved of further responsibility, and lives to this day a hale and hearty old gentleman. Field Marshal Haig, the younger man, to whom not an hour of anxiety from 1914 to 1918 was spared, is dead. So it will not be "on this side" that these two will fight their battles over again.

It was two days after his eightieth birthday that I first asked General von Kluck about the Marne. He came to luncheon with me to meet the British Ambassador and General Wauchope, who, in 1924, succeeded General Bingham.

General von Kluck outlined the battle with military brevity: "Von Moltke, the Commander-in-Chief, ill! Three armies which ought to have been co-operating, acting independently under three separate leaders instead of under one supreme command! The Crown Prince with the Fifth Army on the left; von Bülow with the Second Army in the centre; von Kluck with the First Army on the right. The First Army, which should have been following the Second, was actually forty kilometres ahead of it. Orders, succeeded ere they could be carried out by counter-orders, in *their* turn countermanded, were issued by a headquarters which appeared to have lost its head and to be profoundly ignorant of the actual situation. Von Bülow, believing himself cut off from me, decided that he must withdraw his (Second) Army. I was not only in a safe but in a most advantageous position, however, and was on the verge of closing in on and wiping out the French left flank. Had there at this time been an intelligent understanding between these

three armies and the G.H.Q., the whole history of the War might have been different."

This was the time when von Bülow, thoroughly disturbed, was sending alarmist reports to Headquarters; von Moltke, unable to leave his bed, sent an officer of little experience, Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch, "the evil genius of the war," to the three armies for information and with instructions that, if the retreat could no longer be avoided, the armies were to withdraw in accordance with orders from Headquarters. Hentsch appears to have been suddenly afflicted with megalomania, and decided to give the orders himself in the name of the G.H.Q. With von Bülow he had comparatively easy success. Von Bülow, racked with anxiety as to what was happening to von Kluck's army, retreated. Then Hentsch went to the First Army. Von Kluck, who was just about to advance on the French left wing, thought Hentsch a lunatic who had come from Bedlam. But Hentsch informed him that the other armies were in full retreat and that he must obey the orders from Headquarters and join the general movement.

"I saw everything being destroyed," continued the broken-hearted old General. "I could have gone on alone and taken Paris. Oh, my God!"—and he crashed his two fists down among the crockery of the luncheon table—"if that lunatic had only broken his neck on his way to me, I could have gone on."

Hentsch then went to the Crown Prince's Army, and there continued his work of devastation. There, too, this harbinger of evil found opposition, but when convinced that the other armies were definitely



retreating, there was nothing left for the Crown Prince to do but to save his own by following suit.

“The right wing—the *right* wing retreating ! Why ? Why ? Not a reason in the world.” The old man’s eyes filled with tears. “For me it was over—lost—finished. And for Germany—well—you see what has become of us.”

For years General von Kluck undeservedly suffered the ignominy of failure, but history and time have done their work and it is good to know that no shadow of injustice darkens the closing years of this old campaigner.

## CHAPTER XV

### A MIXED BAG

**B**ERLIN was in those days a happy hunting ground for the adventurer. "Schiebereien," or unlawful profiteering, was a popular occupation. We never learned exactly what the "Schiebers" did in the way of business. They flourished for a time—and generally ended up in gaol.

One day an invitation from a Count "X" to meet General Sir Neill Malcolm, K.C.B., D.S.O., arrived. Not knowing Count "X" I rang up General Malcolm. He did not know him either, but had been asked to meet the Papal Nuncio. I went, and sat next to Princess Radolin, wife of the former German Ambassador to France. She did not know the host nor why she was there. There were forty people lunching and at least thirty-five were asking each other the same question. Almost everyone was a "somebody," and each had swallowed the bait of someone else's name. The luncheon was of the most lavish order. I think we had every luxury except peacocks' tongues.

A fortnight later the banquet was repeated. Again the most expensive dishes and wines. Military, naval, diplomatic services—all were represented. I asked the host point-blank on this occasion what the

object of his hospitality was. The odd-looking little fat man pressed a large bowlful of liqueur brandy on me, rubbed his hands and, bowing, as a Pole *can* bow, said merely :

“*Mais c'est un si grand honneur de vous voir, Monsieur le Colonel,*” and slipped away. So I was no wiser than before.

Shortly afterwards the police called on Count “X” and he disappeared for ever.

We shall never now know why I was asked to meet General Malcolm, or General Malcolm the Papal Nuncio, or the Papal Nuncio Princess Radolin, and the hotelier who provided these Lucullan feasts is still wondering why he did not ask for payment in advance.

Another figure of mystery was the blue-eyed Madonna-like Gretchen, who, in tearful tones, told me that she was the illegitimate daughter of a monarch and the mother of a royal duke's last two children. She was so well versed in dates, places and incidents associated with the two gentlemen she described that, when she begged me to intercede for a pension, I asked her—instead of turning her out as an obvious adventuress—why she had come to me instead of going to a countryman of her own. She replied that the moral influence of British intervention would be much greater. I told her to write out her story. This she did. I then sent the tale to the Berlin police, who in return gave me the lady's history. She had only recently been released from a lengthy term of imprisonment for perpetrating frauds on royal families. Her *modus operandi* was as follows :

When an elderly royal prince was being buried, the sorrowing relatives would find one sad-faced, mourning-clad woman sobbing at the tomb. No one knew her. A sympathetic equerry would be sent to find out who the stranger was. She would look at him with eyes swimming with tears and, choking back her sobs, would ask, "Did he—say nothing—about me and the child?"

The shocked relatives usually paid up.

It was only when someone, who had seen her prostrated at one graveside in the winter time, found her sobbing by another in the spring, that her source of easy money ran dry. She had only been "out" a short time before she brought the revised version of her royal drama to me.

Gretchen was duly visited by the police.

She wrote me a touching letter afterwards, informing me that she bore me no rancour. But that was not all. She added that during our short interview, she had learned to love me and that she was sure fate would bring us together again!

But our visitors were not all of doubtful character. A shy youth, who looked like a schoolboy, responded one morning to my "Come in!" I did not catch the name he introduced himself by, but understood him to say—in fluent English with a slight foreign accent—that, as I had been to see his mother, it would only be polite of him to return the call. "Of course," he added, apologetically, "it is just a matter of form and I feel that you would not really want me to call—if you knew everything."

"Everything?" I said, as I gazed in astonishment

at the awkward, innocent-looking lad, who stood with such a downcast expression before me, "I don't know anything yet—who are you?"

"I'm—I'm a war criminal. Yes, really," he added quickly in answer, I suppose, to my look of amused astonishment. "I'm on the list—burning and plundering a French chateau two years ago."

"How old were you then?" I asked.

"Seventeen. It was just when I went out first. I slept one night in that chateau; next day the Staff arrived and my company was thrown out. I was kicked out into the cowshed. Later in the War, the chateau was destroyed. Probably it was remembered that I was once there and I suppose my name was a good one for the list—so they put it on with my uncle's—but, really, I never burned down any chateau. I thought I ought to tell you about it—because—well—you might not care to receive me."

"Too late now, my boy," I said. "*I have* received you, but tell me who *is* your uncle?"

"Oh! I'm sorry," said the boy, "I thought you knew. The Kaiser. I'm his nephew, Prince Wolfgang of Hesse."

He had come from Friedrichshof to Berlin to try to get a little money for the family, whose lands had been taken, whose state pension had been stopped and whose available cash had gone in the inflation. He had travelled third-class in an unheated train through the winter night.

I asked him where he was stopping.

Hotels were too expensive, he said, so he was going to sleep in an old carriage in a siding in the Potsdamer

Station. It would only be for about three days and lots of people did it.

I told him he could sleep in my sitting room instead of in the station, provided he swore to abjure from incendiarism and larceny.

"Oh!" he said, hurt and distressed, "then you—don't really believe—that I didn't burn that chateau?"

Perhaps the most amusing of my callers was a little, round, fat lady, quite young, with a baby mouth, big brown eyes and chestnut curls, who pounced on me one day and demanded an interview on a subject of international importance. She was trembling with excitement. When I had piloted her to a secluded corner of the vestibule, her pent-up feelings gushed forth. She spoke volubly and with the rapidity of a machine-gun:

"I am a loyal American and I have come to you as one of your allies to tell you that you are all making darn fools of yourselves, wasting all your time on disarmament. Have you any idea of what Germany is doing in the way of chemicals? Listen, I am going to give you just one instance. Fifteen months ago I came to this country with my husband. Elmer died on me here. Now, some wives would have let their man be buried in this darn country. But not me—no, sir! But it was going to take so much time to make all the arrangements for transport, so I asked if there was no way of preserving him.

"Well, to make a long story short, I left him with a firm here to be preserved. It took longer than I thought, and I had to return to New York. I only

came back last week, and I went straight to the preservers to see how they had gotten along with Elmer. Well, Colonel, I could hardly believe my eyes. There he was fresh as paint—preserved in *the* most amazing manner. ‘My! Isn’t that just too wonderful,’ I said. ‘How did you do it?’ ‘Oh! just chemicals,’ they told me. Now, there and then, I realised the big danger we were all facing. Any country that could chemicalise Elmer to such a high state of preservation *must* be dechemicalised before she is even disarmed. The next war is going to be a war of chemicals. I could not rest until I had gotten this off my mind. That’s all, Colonel. I’m taking Elmer back to-morrow, and every time I look at him, so beautifully preserved, I shall feel—now that I have unburdened myself to you—that he has not died in vain.”

She took a long breath, a drink of water, adjusted her chestnut curls, wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, jumped up and rolled her little fat body away, to complete the arrangements for Elmer’s transportation.

One night I had put the finishing touches to a supper table laid for two in my apartment, No. 133, of the Adlon, when a mysterious-looking figure, clad in a shoddy, dyed, black Harris tweed coat, a black cap pulled well down over his eyes, came in and drew from the recesses of his outer garment a large dust-covered bottle. I presumed he was my expected guest, and when he pulled the cap off, I saw that I was right.

"Why the disguise, your Royal Highness?" I asked.

Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia, fourth son of the Kaiser, looked at me inquiringly.

"Disguise? Oh! the coat and cap? That's not a disguise. When my mother died, I couldn't afford to get new black clothes, so I had these old Scotch things dyed. I did pull the cap down a bit to-night, because you know how people talk, and if I were seen coming to your apartment in the Adlon, it would be all over Berlin that we were involved in a plot to restore the monarchy—or some nonsense of that sort."

"Well!" I said, seating the Prince in front of a "Wiener Schnitzel," "as it isn't that kind of nonsense, tell me first, what's in that bottle you brought and then just why we are having this talk at midnight on a winter's night."

"In this bottle," said the Prince, drawing the cork, "is some of the most wonderful Rheinwein in the world. I once managed to pinch a few bottles from my father, and as I knew it would be a long time before I could afford to give you a decent meal in return for this supper, I thought I would bring this contribution to the feast. *Prosit!*"

"And now," I said, putting down my glass, "what's on your mind?"

"It's my father. He is suffering quite enough without all this humiliation about the trial in the dock. He doesn't say much, but we know how that—and this plan to arrest his old officers—is worrying him. It isn't that he fears any fair trial; he would welcome anything in the form of an honest inquiry into



the causes which brought about the war. But just now the shock of having lost my mother has left him so broken—I thought, perhaps, if this other grief were removed, he would be more able to face things.”

I had expected at least a dissertation on the “injustice” of the Treaty, but, having told me exactly what he had come about, Prince August Wilhelm steered the conversation clear of anything of a controversial nature and, after an hour or two’s exchange of War reminiscences, he took his departure, grateful for my assurance that I personally did not believe there would ever be a “trial of the Kaiser.”

I returned his call and went to his villa in Potsdam to have tea with him one afternoon. He was sitting on the doorsteps to intercept me ere I should ring the bell that would bring his servant to the door. “Even the best servants talk,” he explained. He made the tea and brought a blonde-haired son of seven years to me. “His mother got tired of us,” he said pathetically, “and went away and left us both.”

I don’t know what he was living on in those days. Once he gave me three little water colours, which he had painted, and asked me to take them to England and sell them. They fetched a guinea a piece. There was meat for dinner for several days after that in the villa at Potsdam.

## CHAPTER XVI

## “BLOODY TUESDAY”

NEW labour laws raised new labour trouble in the early weeks of 1920, and in the first days of February it was evident that matters between the working classes and the Government must soon reach a climax. On Tuesday, the 13th of February—“Bloody Tuesday”—that climax came. I was held up on the way to the Commission Headquarters in the Tiergarten by a seemingly endless procession, marching to the Reichstag to protest against the new labour laws. And what a procession! Weary, apathetic, ill-dressed, hungry-looking thousands of men, women and children without, apparently, a kick left in them. Nearly all wore the red badge of Communism.

Now and again a feeble attempt to raise some revolutionary song was made, but it never succeeded. The unending red stream, exhaling sheer hopelessness, made one think of a long dead worm. And yet within a couple of hours these same people had been transformed into a howling, desperate, mad mob, who, had they succeeded in getting into the Reichstag, would have torn the members limb from limb without any party distinction.

A number of machine-guns had been posted as a

precautionary measure round the parliament buildings. It was these that aroused a feeling of bitter resentment in the half-frozen crowd. This was heightened by the frenzied speeches of the mob leaders, to whom the sign of arms was a text ready made.

“Look at them, the bastards ! Guns ! Militarism again ! Haven’t we suffered enough from that ? Are you going to stand there and let them shoot you down like dogs ? ”

It was like a blast of gunpowder. Every red rag waved ; every voice shouted one menacing word, “ Vorwaerts.”

But at the first indication of the forward rush the machine-guns blazed. When the roll of fire ceased fifty-two dead and over a hundred wounded lay on the paving stones and in the flower beds of the Königsplatz.

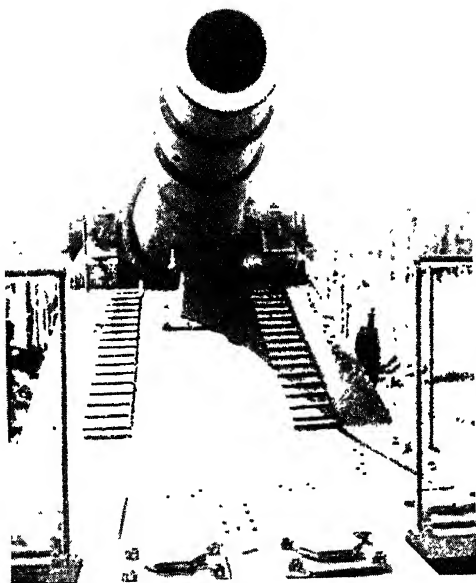
With a howl of despair the nearest survivors threw themselves on some isolated gunners, and eventually flung their battered bleeding bodies into the near-by Spree. Then they gathered up their own dead, formed a procession, and wearily, apathetically, hopelessly, in the cold drizzle of a February afternoon, they marched unsteadily homewards.

In the Siegesallee—that monstrosity of “art”—someone tried to voice “The Red Flag.”

“Ah, Christ, shut up !” cried a woman between her sobs.

And the procession disappeared in silence.

General Malcolm had a narrow escape on that day. During the nine months he had been in Germany he



"BIG BERTHA" 1916



"BIG BERTHA" 1920



had won for himself a great measure of confidence. His attitude had always been, “The War is over and with its end enmity should cease. Understanding can only come from mutual contact.” Consequently he had seen a good deal of the German officials, who respected and liked him. Believing that the best place for him to see what was going to happen was the very front line of the mob, he worked his way through the crowd and reached a point of vantage just when the order to fire was about to be given. An officer of the machine-gunners recognised him, darted down the steps of the Reichstag, seized him by the collar, and half drew, half hurled him behind the firing line as the guns fired.

Such an episode as that of “Bloody Tuesday” was bound to add to the difficulties of the Government.

At that moment, too, the French were pressing for the complete disarmament and demobilisation of the Army. Erhardt, commanding the troops then operating in Silesia, flatly refused to permit his Command to be disbanded. “Disband these thousands in this poverty-stricken land,” he asked, “what will happen? Robbery, pillage and murder.” He decided to march them to Berlin where the Government could have the responsibility of looking after them !

The last straw was undoubtedly the demand, vociferously voiced in the British election of 1919, for the extradition of the “War Criminals.” The Government knew that plots for their overthrow were well afoot (what they did not know was that some of the arch-conspirators were in their own midst) and this, and the impossibility of even suggesting to

the people that they should arrest their former leaders, was placing them in a hopeless position.

One day Prince Münster came to me and said :

“ Unless these people have someone to speak to, to whom they can make their position clear, and who they may hope will present their difficulties in the true light to Britain, they are going under, and nothing can save the country from civil war. Everyone is armed and you saw the other day at the Reichstag enough to know what the result must be. Will you—you speak German, you’ve been in this from the beginning, and we know you—come with me and meet these people, listen to them and then—Oh ! I don’t know what then, but perhaps a way will be found ? There is a house here in Berlin where those whose one interest is the Country, apart from, and independent of, any party, come together every week. We meet there on Friday next. I have suggested to them a meeting with you and they welcome it. They feel that whatever protests they may make officially will only be looked on by the Allies as excuses for evasion ; but if someone who saw, who felt, who knew, could explain in England, then there would be hope.”

It would have been impossible for anyone in the position of General Bingham, General Malcolm, or any member of the Embassy Staff to have discussed at that moment any matter with German Government officials without the seal of officialdom being applied to such a conference. With me it was different, my only merit lay in that I spoke their language—I was a representative of a country on whose sense of justice they still banked a hope—and in the fact that I was

in a position to approach personally those who might be induced to lend an understanding ear. I went.

We had supper. I sat between President Ebert and my hostess, the only lady present. She left us immediately the quickly-served meal was finished. And then we men, each with a good German sixpenny cigar and a long beaker of Münchener, settled ourselves in easy chairs. A few seconds of silence. Someone coughed. I coughed—rather to ease the situation than my throat. Then our host, raising his glass, said, “Colonel, will you drink with us to ‘The Day’—the day when a better understanding between your country and ours is reached?” He came across the room to me, touched my tankard with his and we drank ; drank until there was not a drop left.

“Now—may we talk to you?” he asked.

“Please,” I said, “but, you understand, I am here as a private individual.”

Gustav Noske, Minister of Defence, whose machine-gunners had repulsed the mob on “Bloody Tuesday,” was the spokesman. Noske had been a basket-maker. Long before the war he was one of the most active and most feared Socialist deputies. “Noske never opens his mouth except to talk sense—imagine the danger of that!” someone said. They put him in gaol, frequently, but he talked sense as soon as he came out. As a result, he commanded general respect and awe.

He was a huge, strong man of terrifying appearance, with the rough figure of an Abraham Lincoln. Black hair, bushy eyebrows, and a heavy black moustache framed a face drained of colour, stamped with character and grim determination. He was the essence of



honesty, and he either trusted or mistrusted accordingly. He never was suspicious and such is the irony of fate, that it was the lack of this mean quality that brought about his fall from power.

It was Noske who had quelled the Kiel naval revolt by dealing out summary justice. At the time that Spartacists were running amok in Berlin and the Government could not decide to use the ruthless blood-spilling measures which were obviously necessary, Noske appealed to the Government to deal with the trouble in the only efficient way.

"Then do it yourself, Noske," shouted someone.

"Very well, I shall," he said, without a moment's hesitation. "If a bloodthirsty butcher has to be found it may as well be me."

"Someone had to do the bloody business," said Noske, telling me the story later.

In March 1919 he issued the famous Noske Shooting Decree, whereby persons carrying arms against Government troops were to be shot at sight. Some terrible murders and massacres resulted, but gradually the rebels were beaten. Noske had saved his country, but he had become the national ogre.

One horrifying story of what occurred as a result of the Shooting Decree was that of a certain Lieutenant Marloh's action in herding thirty innocent sailors into a tiny courtyard off one of the principal streets. These men happened to be carrying revolvers issued to them for guard duty. On presenting themselves for pay they were passed into the yard, presumably to wait their turn. Marloh, believing them to be rebels, mounted a couple of machine-guns at two first-floor

windows and riddled them with bullets. One man escaped.

Immediately after the Armistice in 1918 when, according to the terms agreed to, the German Fleet had to be handed over to the Allies, the crews refused to sail. For a second time Noske went to Kiel to deal with insubordination in the Navy, but on this occasion his methods were very different. To each ship he went and, like a father talking to children who didn't know the way, he showed them that this great final sacrifice which was being asked of them was for the sake of their fellow countrymen, their children and their children's children.

“I told them that I would stand on the end of the harbour as they sailed away. I stood there and waved them away—to Scapa Flow—and when they could see me no more and they had disappeared into the mist, I prayed that God in His mercy might see that surely they and I had suffered enough.”

Coldly, dispassionately, at first, that night in the Victoria Strasse, Noske put before me the intolerable position into which the Allies' demand for the surrender of the War Criminals was driving the German Government. For a year he and his colleagues had struggled to give the nation something that would encourage confidence, and now the Allies demanded of them the one thing that would make the people turn and rend them.

“You want us,” said Noske, “to arrest the Kaiser, the Crown Prince, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, hundreds of officers, high and low, and deliver them over to you to be tried for crimes against you. Since when has it

been the custom for the accuser to be the judge? What would our people think of those who made such a foul demand of them, and what would the world think of the people who complied? In God's name, what kind of people do you think we are? Even of our self-respect you would strip us."

He stopped—no one dared break the dead silence—then no longer looking at me, but staring straight in front of him, he went on.

"I can easily afford to risk my life; I have little to live for. My only son you shot to pieces. . . . Oh, he's not dead. He's only in a madhouse. That is the end of my family."

His face grew hard and his voice metallic, and he brought out those last words as if he were biting grit. And something cold shivered down my spine as I felt what this being of seeming steel and iron was enduring.

"Get your country to see that they ask an impossibility; they will if things are explained. Then for us—a little confidence awakened, a little will born of confidence; a little work born of will; a little success born of work, and with the help of all-healing time we may, who knows, turn the corner."

And then the iron snapped. Noske buried his head in his hands, and to himself—or to heaven—more than to me, cried:

"I can't—I *can't* go on ruling with a machine-gun!"

Besides President Ebert and Noske were Müller, the Prime Minister; Gessler, Minister of Reconstruction, later Noske's successor as Minister of Defence; Schwander, President of Cassel; General

von Winterfeld, head of the Armistice Commission ; Max Warburg and Melchior, the Hamburg financiers ; and our host and hostess, Herr and Frau von Holtzendorff. The former was a brother of Admiral von Holtzendorff, and one of the directors of the Hamburg-America Line. Albert Ballin, the head of that concern and one of Germany's greatest brains, had appointed him a sort of official host in Berlin and, under the kindly and hospitable régime of his gracious wife, his house became a species of general clearing house for political feelings, aims and ideas.

I had told my batman, a very practical Aberdonian, that I was dining with Noske that evening. On donning my overcoat, I felt something heavy in it.

“What on earth have you put in my pocket ?” I asked him.

“Weel, sir, I wadna gae near yon man withoot being airmed tae the teeth, so I loaded up your army revolver and put it in wi' half a dozen spare rounds.”

Much to his disgust I refused to be armed to the teeth, but when I reached the rendezvous and found the house surrounded by detectives who certainly were, I wondered if I had not been unduly rash.

Noske drove me back to the Adlon after dinner, and in the car I told him, laughingly, about my batman and the revolver.

“Well,” he said, putting his hand in his coat pocket, and producing a deadly-looking automatic, “you are not as careful as I am. Not that this would save me, but I should like the satisfaction of having a shot at whoever got me.”

I went to my rooms at midnight and wrote for four

hours. The next morning I took my letter to General Bingham. When he had read it, he sent for me and said :

“ Go to England with it to-day.”

In London I saw General Sir William Thwaites, Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson and Mr. Winston Churchill, who was then Secretary of State for War. Of all those to whom I had the privilege of talking at that time Mr. Churchill appeared to me to be the most alive to the seriousness of the internal conditions in Germany.

From the War Office I went to the offices of the Privy Council, where Sir Almeric FitzRoy took me to Mr. Balfour, to whom I told my story. I had met Mr. Balfour several times previously, but this was the first occasion on which I was brought into close personal contact with him. He took a keen interest in the matter, and said he wished to have a copy of my letter.

It was only some years later that I had the satisfaction of learning that the subsequent modification of the extradition clause of the Treaty was to some extent due to the action I had taken. In the memoirs of Sir Almeric FitzRoy, published in 1925, it is stated that “ Mr. Balfour was so impressed by the poignancy of the situation which the letter depicted that he arranged for its circulation to the Cabinet and took the trouble to urge upon Sir Maurice Hankey that this should be done in a way which would insure the document being read.”

Later Sir Almeric writes : “ I have had the satisfaction of reading the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting which considered Roddie’s letter, which appears to have produced important results in diminishing the number of plans for the surrender of German officers, and in bringing about a rigid definition of the class of crimes which were to be the subject of investigation.”

The effect the Armistice Terms had on Germany is not always realised. I heard of their reception from Erzberger’s own lips. Early in 1920, Arnold Rechberg, a friend of Ludendorff and a supporter of Kapp, asked me to meet Erzberger—then Minister of Finance, and one of the best hated men in the country—at his house. Erzberger proved to be a short reddish-haired man, who was ready to talk to me in a very broad Swabian dialect which grew more and more pronounced as his earnestness increased. This only added to the vividness of the picture which he drew for me as we strolled away together down the sunlit path through the Tiergarten from Rechberg’s house.

In a railway siding in the Forest of Compiègne on the 8th of November, 1918, two railway coaches drew up alongside each other. In one sat Field Marshal Foch and from the other there descended a German gentleman named Matthias Erzberger, a member of the German Cabinet. Now Fate must have watched Matthias with her tongue in her cheek that morning. Five years previously this same Erzberger had drawn up what Daniels in *The Rise of the German Republic*<sup>1</sup> refers to as the most “extravagant memoranda of Germany’s

<sup>1</sup> London : Nisbet & Co., Ltd.

war aims." He was now to accept from his conquering enemy—"to swallow them whole—dished out as to a dog"—Erzberger's own words to me—terms which he was permitted neither to discuss nor argue. "I could not believe it—it could not be possible. I tried to tell them this—it was of no use. If I refused to accept their terms on behalf of my country it meant thousands of more lives being thrown away—ten thousand lives a day. Cold sweat broke out on me. If I accepted, I knew I should be agreeing to the impossible, but at least bloodshed would cease for the moment. On the 11th of November I signed the Armistice terms—and then I went out and vomited. That I had signed my own death warrant I fully believed, but that mattered little compared with the thought that the remaining manhood of Germany might be saved to reshape their ruined country."

Poor Erzberger! It took brave men to shoulder responsibilities for Germany in those days. His doom followed him from that little railway siding to the Black Forest where, only a few months after our meeting, he had betaken himself to rest. There, where he felt himself safe, and when he might, with reason, have believed that Time had proved him to have taken the only course possible, his enemies found him—and blew his brains out.

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE GRAND COUP

IT was in March 1920 that the foundations of the new Republic suffered the first serious shock. The story of the Kapp *Putsch*, as I saw it, may bear retelling.

There was something peculiar and sinister about Berlin in those March days. Rumours of "something brewing," of a potential *Putsch*, were rife. A general sense of insecurity seemed to have taken hold of the people. Everyone was waiting for something to happen and nobody knew what.

Erhardt's army had marched from Silesia to Döberitz (fifteen miles from Berlin), but somehow this instead of inspiring confidence had added to the prevailing disquiet. Fully armed and 5,000 strong, they had come ostensibly to give up their arms and disband. In reality they formed part of an ambitious but still-born monarchist plot to seize Berlin, overthrow the Republic and reinstate the Hohenzollerns.

Noske, the Minister for Defence, had been betrayed by some of those he had trusted—notably General von Lüttwitz and a Colonel Bauer. These had seized the opportunity the Erhardt Army had provided and, along with several others of the old régime, had engineered a monarchist *coup*.



Little groups of soldiers were dotted about at an hour of the night when no one was usually to be seen. Early on the morning of March 13th, as my car swung out of the Brandenburger Gate bearing me to luncheon with H.H. the Princess Sophie Marie Louise, Duchess Friedrich of Anhalt, a sister of Prince Max of Baden, in Dessau—nearly a hundred miles away—I was amazed to see soldiers. The only explanation I could think of was that the Government were taking extra precautions against possible labour troubles.

And then, just as I had comfortably settled the matter in my mind, I saw something which startled me. "Go back," I said to the chauffeur, "and come on again slowly to pass that man standing on the pavement." I had only had a fleeting glimpse of him and I wanted to be sure. He was looking at his watch as we came on him the second time. Ludendorff! Evidently he had an appointment or was waiting for something. I was more puzzled than ever. What was Ludendorff doing there at that hour on a winter's morning? It was no mere constitutional. He was waiting—and watching. But for what? And those strange uniformed groups? Who were they? What was afoot? "Oh, probably nothing!" I thought, as we tore on towards Dessau: nerves—the result of this "banshee" that had cast an evil shadow over us these last few days. But anxiety had been born in my mind, and I gave way to speculation as to what might happen if, as one had heard it suggested, the Erhardt army, instead of disarming and disbanding, should march on Berlin

and come into conflict with the Government troops.

Civil war !

But the Reichswehr, the Government troops, would not fire on their own people and then the Government which had dragged the country back from the edge of a volcano would be powerless to save it from being buried under the lava of revolution. Any attempt at this time to reinstate the Hohenzollerns must be disastrous. The majority of the people would have none of it. But a serious attempt would mean hell. Thinking in this way, I fell asleep, and only woke up as we rolled over the paving stones in front of the Palais Friedrich in Dessau.

Finding that the main doors of the Palace opened directly on to the principal street, and desiring to attract as little attention as possible, I drove round the building looking for a more modest entrance. In a wing abutting on a very pleasant garden I found what I sought, and was soon comfortably installed in a little apartment gay with flowered chintz and bits of old china. I washed in an old-fashioned basin and thawed—aided by a tumbler of hot mulled claret—in front of an old-fashioned stove.

The Duchess was a grave woman with greying hair. A dark blouse, waist belt and long plainly cut skirt reaching to the ground, gave a capable, purposeful appearance to the handsome, half-Russian Princess.

I have seldom seen anyone in whom the characteristics of two nations were so definite—and so apart. She was Russian, and she was German, quite distinctly one *and* the other. The Slav features of the former,

the facility for languages, the proneness to descriptive gesture and poetic expression on the one hand, and the plain speech and practical manner on the other. It was curious too that it was the latter that predominated when she was most moved. In general conversation she was decorative with all the charm of the Russian of her caste, but a touch of deep feeling transformed that into solid, almost blunt earnestness.

Over the after-luncheon coffee (*ersatz*) we sat discussing current events in Germany. Berlin, strife, revolution seemed so far away. We were mutually consoling one another with the comforting thought, to which the wish was no doubt father, that the worst days were over, and that the dawn of a new prosperity was about to break, when the doors of the dining room were thrown open and we both turned in astonishment to the white-faced butler who stood looking at his mistress in such a state of evident excitement that he could scarcely articulate.

"Your Highness—Your Highness!"

"Yes, yes! What is wrong?"

"Revolution in Berlin. Civil war. The Government fled."

I picked up the Special Edition with its scare headlines—the ink not yet dried on it—that had fallen from the man's trembling fingers.

Erhardt's troops had occupied the capital without opposition and had seized the principal government buildings. The Ebert government had disappeared—taken flight. Civil war was imminent.

So much we read.

"Oh! This poor country!" said the Duchess in

a voice of despair. "How much more? How much longer? Militarism again—the curse that brought ruin on us!"

My leave-taking was speedy and unceremonious.

"Yes, go! Go," she said, "and if nothing else will stop this, get your country to do something."

The streets of Dessau were already filled with excited crowds. It was the same in all the towns and villages along the route. Small groups of young men, armed and in strange oddments of uniform, appeared either to be answering roll-calls or hurrying to some rendezvous. Evidently the organisation of the *Putschists* had not been limited to Berlin.

We were breaking every rule of the road that afternoon. With a jolt that threw me on to the floor the limousine grated to a sudden halt. I was pulled out by two armed men and marched into a barracks. The chauffeur was ordered to follow. The persuasion of a loaded rifle enforced instant compliance. Two blustering officers were bellowing questions at some frightened civilians in the room into which I was more thrown than shown.

"Foreign car—racing to Berlin—this fellow carrying a revolver." My captors beamed with satisfaction at being able to announce such a prize. It was a great day this for the little town of Wittenberg! The harmless, frightened civilians were neglected while the Herr Major and the Herr Oberleutnant bestowed their attention on me. They bawled:

"Where are you going?"

"Berlin."

"What for?"

"Going home."

"Got any arms?"

"No."

"You're a liar. What about this revolver?"

"You've got it. I haven't."

"Got any papers?"

I nodded.

"Well, why the hell don't you give them to me?"

"You haven't asked for them."

"Give them to me, damn you!"

"Say 'please'!"

I was enjoying in anticipation the moment that was about to come, and when it did it was worth the time I had wasted.

One glance at my yellow pass—and they just wilted.

A British officer! They explained. . . . If they had only known. . . . Would I forgive them? . . . They were a little excited that day. . . . They were acting under instructions of the new Dictator. . . . The liberator of the country. . . . It was their disagreeable task to search all vehicles for arms, and prevent such being taken to Berlin and used in support of the traitors who had fled. . . . Britain was going to support the new government, they hoped. . . . And they had inconvenienced a British officer. . . . But they would give me a signed paper in case I was held up again on my way.

"Thank you," I said, "that will not be necessary. I am quite satisfied with the efficacy of the paper I carry. If you will be so kind as to return it—thanks—and my revolver, please!"

The Herr Major rattled down the stairs before me

shouting orders for my car. He opened the door for me, called the guard at the gate to attention, and saluted.

"I hope you won't carry away a wrong impression," he said.

"Rest assured that the impression I shall carry away will be correct," I replied, returning his sickly smile with a sweet one.

Twice more I was stopped. But my small yellow pass was a magician's wand.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## REVOLT

BERLIN, when I reached it, was in an uproar. The hurrahs of the Hohenzollern partisans clashed with "The Red Flag" of the Communists and the yells of denunciation of the Republicans.

They were poor and inefficient conspirators, these usurpers. As a figure-head they had chosen a civil servant named Kapp. This poor dupe, not realising that he was to be replaced by someone more picturesque if the affair went well, nor that he would be made the scapegoat if it failed, accepted the position of Dictator with enthusiasm. He nominated himself Prime Minister, and persuaded a few nonentities to accept "Ministries" in his Cabinet. Erhardt's 5,000 marched on Berlin, to find, when they got there, that the cupboard was bare. Ebert and his Cabinet, realising that armed opposition would plunge the country once more into bloodshed, had quietly left Berlin. Instead of an arrest of the Republican Ministers, dictation of terms, the assumption of the vacated Ministries as planned, Kapp was able only to seize a few empty buildings. There was no one to arrest, no one to dictate to, no vacated offices to assume.

There were several reasons why the *Putschists* could never have succeeded. They were unprepared, their hands were forced by a scare that they were to be betrayed, so they acted sooner than was intended. They had none of the right people. Ludendorff was hanging about watching the turn of events. And there were others who hung back, whose names, definitely associated with the new cause, might have given strength to it, especially at this time when a revival of feeling in favour of the Kaiser had undoubtedly taken place. But the main reason the Kapp *Putsch* failed was a simple one. The people did not *want* this change and would have none of it. The ignorance of the plotters must have been colossal. It was apparent to anyone who moved about the country and among the people that the general desire was for peace. War had cost them dear. There was no rooted objection to a return of the Hohenzollern, but the people were not prepared to pay anything for it. Certainly not the price of peace.

Already twelve hours after the *coup* prices of food and all other commodities were doubled. A general strike was to be proclaimed. Water and light would be cut off; all transport would stop; the workpeople would be unemployed, and in a few days starvation and disease would be raging.

The prospect was appalling.

I walked about Berlin until three in the morning getting the feeling of the crowds. If Kapp and his colleagues had done the same thing they would have learned more in half-an-hour than they had done during their months of conspiracy. In their ignorance



they were placing the country in even greater dangers than those from which it had just managed, with so much difficulty and damage, to escape.

The printing presses were stopped—except such as published the edicts of the Dictator.

England, it was stated, would support the revolutionaries. This lie was a powerful weapon, and there seemed no way of contradicting it. Lord Kilmarnock, the British Chargé d’Affaires, and his American colleague, Loring Dresel, had met Professor Ludwig Stein of the *Vossische Zeitung*, to discuss a method of circulating a *démenti*. The best that could be done was to write out a denial and hang copies in the windows of the fifty-odd agencies of the newspaper. But these were read only by a small and incredulous minority.

“If,” I thought, as I lay sleepless waiting for the horrors of the morning, “Kapp really believes in the myth of British support, he may hold out stubbornly, confident of ultimate success, but if he knew that Britain definitely disapproved and if he could be persuaded that the majority was against him, then he might crumble fairly soon—soon enough, possibly, to prevent Berlin from being turned into a shambles.”

But how were we to get at him? The Embassy staff could do nothing. To approach him in any official way would have been a contravention of all the laws of diplomacy.

And yet, to disillusion him, to force the truth down his throat seemed the only means of salvation.

But—who? How?

A rifle cracked. Howls of execration and a stam-

pede of feet. Two short bursts of machine-gun fire—then silence.

That sort of thing could *not* go on. He would have to be told the truth ; but again, who—how ?

Someone turned the handle of my door.

“ Who’s there ? ”

“ It’s me—‘ Scottie.’ ” Major Herbert Scott, of the 4th Hussars, haggard and worn out, threw himself on my sofa.

“ I’ve been out all night,” he said. “ You know, this sort of thing can’t go on. Someone ought to go and see this Dictator bloke and tell him the truth.”

I stared at him in blank amazement. How did he come to voice my own thoughts at that moment ?

“ Scottie ” was concise. “ I hear,” he said, “ that Kapp has been told that General Malcolm guaranteed to General von Lüttwitz England’s support of a Monarchist *Putsch*—England seeing in a successful German Republic a dangerous example to her own Socialists. General Malcolm is in England at the moment and can’t deny the statement, knowing, as he probably does, nothing about it. Kill that lie and you kill the *Putsch*.”

“ Yes, I know—I know,” I said wearily, “ but how ? And who’s to do it ? ”

And then the strange fellow jumped up, leaned over me and bellowed in my ear, “ *You*, that’s why I came. They know you know the Hohenzollern crowd, and if *you* tell them it’s no good they may believe you. You’ll very likely get the sack, but if things go Bolshie you’ll get your throat cut. G’bye.”

I jumped up and went to the bathroom. The light

would not turn on. The hot and cold taps refused to have anything to say to the bath. Then I remembered that I had filled it the previous night and that supply was all I should have for—how long? I dressed shiveringly—the radiators belied their name. I rang the bell—no one answered. On a trench spirit-heater I boiled some of my precious bath water and made some very untasty tea. A couple of ginger-nuts completed my breakfast, and then, wrapped in an eiderdown, I sat down to telephone. But no one answered my call. Dead—everything dead!

Outside it was snowing. I passed unchallenged through the Potsdamer Platz. The entrance to the Wilhelm Strasse was heavily barricaded with barbed wire. A half-frozen boy in a uniform and steel helmet many sizes too large for him asked, through his chattering teeth, if I had a pass. I showed him a share transfer with a couple of little red seals, and gave him a ginger-nut. He tried to salute with his mouth full and I passed through. Our offices in those days were in the Wilhelm Strasse. There I warmed myself and telephoned for an appointment.

The ante-rooms of the Prime Minister's Palais were crowded when I entered them a few minutes before the hour—10 a.m.—appointed for my meeting with Kapp. My sponsor—an excited gentleman who informed me that he was to be the new Minister for Foreign Affairs—instructed me that I should address Kapp as either “Mr. Dictator” or “Mr. Prime Minister.”

As, however, there was a perfectly good Prime Minister with the real government, now in Stuttgart,

and I was by no means convinced of my prospective host's dictatorial powers, I decided that "Mr. Kapp" would meet the requirements for the time being.

I recognised many of the people around me. Soldiers—mostly of the higher ranks—members of the Reichstag—civil officials, all contributing to the babel of sound produced by voiced speculation on Kapp's chances and on the particular job, in the event of the *coup* being successful, which each speaker had in his eye for himself.

A brisk young man wearing the Iron Cross and badges of captain's rank, took me in charge and led me through the corridors to Kapp's private apartment, where I had stipulated the meeting should take place. A tear-stained, white-faced young woman scurried frightenedly out of our way.

"Fräulein Kapp!" whispered my guide to me.

"Poor thing," I said, somewhat to the astonishment of the young officer; and I thought to myself, "She looks as if she knew better than her father."

Kapp, a big man, with a heavily scarred face, memento of student days at Bonn, came forward with an affected breeziness, and greeted me effusively. I told him at once that I was no emissary from the Embassy, as he had evidently hoped, but came merely as a private individual who asked to be allowed to tell him the unvarnished truth. I told him that I had come to him from the streets of Berlin, and from the highways and byways of the country. The people were dead against revolution and would have none of it. The story of British support was an absolute lie. Kapp was evidently being spoon-fed with

what his advisers wished him to know and what he was anxious to swallow. I pointed out to him that things recently had taken a turn for the better. The exchange had improved. The Allies had made definite concessions, employment was increasing, and altogether conditions in Germany were better. Why, then, at such a time had this deplorable move been made ?

“ Scoundrels like Erzberger,” replied Kapp, “ would have ruined the country in no time. The nation had to be saved from such as them. The people had only been duped into a feeling of false security by a pack of adventurers.”

“ But the fact remains,” I insisted, “ that, adventurers or not, they had succeeded in putting the country in a better state than it has been for years.”

I asked him if he had anything definite to offer the country in exchange for the peace of which he was robbing it.

“ Yes, a soul.”

“ That,” I suggested, “ hardly comes under the heading of ‘ definite.’ Do you propose to restore the Kaiser ? ”

“ No.”

“ Or one of his sons ? ”

“ Well—er—not at present. That might come later when the nation is free to choose for itself. With an encouraging gesture now from Britain, Germany would be freed from the pernicious influence of Socialism, Communism and Bolshevism ; a new standard would be raised, something to which they could look up. Self-respect would be restored.”

"Self-respect on an empty stomach? In a couple of days this town will be in a state of famine. How do you propose to deal with the state of affairs that a general strike will evoke?"

Kapp assumed a Napoleonic attitude.

"If necessary we will deal with that with our machine-guns."

A vision of a man crying in agony only a few days earlier rose up before me—"I can't—I can't go on ruling with a machine-gun."

I rose to go, imploring him to realise how matters stood.

"England has promised her support. England would——"

"England *won't*. England gave her recognition to the Ebert Government and England has a sense of honour about such things." I tried to convince him, and begged him to think of the lives of those uniformed boys whose ranks I had passed on my way to him, before he decided to continue with a project so utterly devoid of any prospect of success.

"We shall achieve success, though it may mean bloodshed. The end will justify the means."

With a muttered hope that whether he succeeded or failed it might be without his machine-guns, I left him.

The babel ceased in the ante-rooms as I passed through. There was something more worthy of conjecture now than whether one's uniform still fitted, or whether such and such an office would be given to so and so! "Was England going to back Kapp?"

The prospective Foreign Minister who had introduced me, begged me hysterically to do something to

secure an official recognition from England. "Even a statement in a speech by one of the English Ministers would be sufficient. If something were not forthcoming soon, then nothing could save the country."

That day things went from bad to worse. There was street fighting in several parts of the city and several lives were lost. The works were shut down. There was little water and less food. How long before anarchy replaced Kapp?

The following morning Count Brockdorff-Rantzau telephoned and said :

"Are you aware that Kapp is using your visit to him as evidence of British and Allied support? If you give me authority I shall go to him and his 'Cabinet' and give him the lie in his teeth."

I went to see Count Rantzau and told him exactly what had passed between Kapp and myself.

"Then I can have your authority to deny Kapp's statements," he said.

"My authority," I said, "is of little importance, but I shall telephone to Lord Kilmarlock, the British Chargé d'Affaires, and ask him personally to deny the story to you."

I telephoned to the Embassy. The apparatus had two receivers. I handed one to the Count and then introduced him over the wire to Lord Kilmarlock, and asked him to tell the Chargé d'Affaires exactly what Kapp had said.

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau took the transmitter and, speaking in French, addressed a few preliminary *phrases de politesse*. He then gave a short but lucid account of what was going on at the Prime Minister's

palace in the Wilhelm Strasse, and concluded with the question :

“ Will you tell me if there is any truth in the repeated statements made by Kapp and his gang—that Britain has promised them her support ? ”

Lord Kilmarnock's reply was terse and to the point. “ *C'est un sacré mensonge.* ”

French is an elegant language, but in the mouth of a blunt Scot it can be as forcible as his native Doric.

“ And now,” said Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, laying down the instrument and pulling on his gloves, “ I am going to the Wilhelm Strasse to finish this tragic farce.”

I knew then that the end was near, and it was with a light heart that I battled my way through the winter blizzard to our headquarters.

Some weeks later I was dining with Professor Caro. Professor Ludwig Stein was there. He had been present at the fateful meeting, and from him I learned what had happened.

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau arrived at the Prime Minister's palace and asked to see Herr Kapp.

The Dictator, he was told, could not receive him—he was closeted with his Cabinet at a life and death meeting.

“ Good,” said Rantzau, “ the moment is opportune. I shall be in at the death,” and striding through the crowded ante-chamber, he reached the room where the “ Cabinet ” were sitting. Without knocking and without being announced, he entered, closed the door and stood with his back to it.

Kapp, white-faced and with trembling hands—



surrounded by his advisers and hangers-on (Ludendorff was among them, Professor Stein told me)—sat, a picture of miserable indecision, at one end of the conference table.

The babel of voices sank first to a whisper and then to dead silence as the Count, with folded arms, stood motionless at the door. He slowly swept the room with a cold, contemptuous stare, letting his eyes travel from Kapp round the table and back, until they came finally to rest on the poor and now thoroughly apprehensive "Dictator."

And then in a few biting words he told them—the truth. It was indeed the death knell.

An attempt was made during the following twenty-four hours to come to terms with the Government then in Stuttgart. But they would consider nothing but unconditional surrender and the withdrawal of Erhardt's army.

The life of the capital, as a result of the general strike, was paralysed. All public services, water, light and all transport services had been cut off at a stroke. The country was on the verge of anarchy. The Kappists realised that it was now a case of *sauve qui peut*.

On the evening of the day after the Rantzau incident, a taxicab drove up to the gates of the Prime Minister's palace. Into it stepped a man and a woman. It was difficult to recognise the muffled face of the former. The pale, frightened face of the woman was tear-stained. Their belongings, which there had been no time to pack, were bundled into a sheet tied by the four corners, and flung on to the top of the taxicab.

Kapp and his daughter drove to the Templehof Field. There the "Dictator" stepped into a waiting plane and departed for Sweden, leaving behind him a country in so infernal a mess that the hearts of more experienced men than President Ebert and his Government might well have quaked at the spectacle. Two years later Kapp died.

One horrible incident marked the retreat of Erhardt's Brigade from the city. The troops were led back down Unter den Linden, through the Brandenburg Gate, the way they had come. Berlin turned out in its thousands to watch and to jeer at this procession of a humiliated army. As the rear guard reached the Gate rifle-fire was suddenly directed on the noisy, but harmless crowd and mowed down men, women and children—one more example of the utter senselessness and destructiveness which from first to last characterised this misbegotten *Putsch*.

Lord Rosebery, to whom I had written regarding recent developments in Germany, replied :

"When the coup d'état began I piqued myself on having been a good prophet, for I always said that Prussia would become a monarchy again. Now you say that the revolution proves that a monarchy is impossible ; so I retire.

"This weapon of a general strike is new and formidable. Napoleon III would not have succeeded in his coup d'état if a general strike had been proclaimed. But in those days we had a less fiendish imagination."

## CHAPTER XIX

## LUDENDORFF

IN November 1918, a gentleman of Teutonic appearance, disguised with blue spectacles and calling himself "Herr Linden," had arrived on the sheltering shores of Sweden. Germany was no safe or pleasant place in those days for those whose names spelled failure, and in the safe haven of Scandinavia "Herr Linden"—who was known in his own country as Field Marshal Ludendorff—found a more congenial if less exciting retreat than Germany was likely to offer him.

Nearly two years later, when time had tempered the feelings of Germany toward her former leaders, Ludendorff, who was not of the stuff of which unsung heroes are shaped, returned to Berlin, found a following among the hot-headed reactionaries who had nothing to lose and all to gain, and began that career of intrigue which led through the Kapp fiasco to a similar and almost equally disastrous piece of clowning in Bavaria.

It was curious that no one seemed to care for him. He had failed, it is true, but so had others, like Hindenburg, who still commanded affection and respect.

Shortly after Ludendorff's return to Germany I climbed the stairs of the apartment house in which he was living, in wise seclusion, as the guest of one of his former comrades. He had, so I was authoritatively informed, been approached by the Soviet and offered a high post in the Russian Army, which he was asked to organise and lead.

Ludendorff did not like the peace terms. Who, indeed, did? He was honestly anxious to prevent Bolshevism in Germany and he, like many others, had come to believe that a talk over matters might do more good than the writing and perusal of documents.

I waited in the empty room. Ludendorff came in. A big heavy-cheeked, "dour" looking man, and I felt—but no! I did not feel—that was just it. There was something about him that reminded me of a dead fish. The face seemed to be without expression. He gave me his hand—it was cold and clammy—and politely piloted me to the sofa. His voice, too, was expressionless. One understood why he was not popular. This was a man who *gave* nothing. He exuded not one scrap of human feeling. I daresay he had some, but if it did exist it was bottled up for Ludendorff himself. I felt there could only be one point of view on any question for this man—his own.

In metallic monotone he spoke to me :

"The Russian question is more serious than the world knows ; the Bolshevists are devoting their attention to India, Afghanistan, China. In a few years Britain will realise this. (To do him credit, he was right so far.) France, Germany, England

will go down under Bolshevism." There was, he said, only one way of staying the peril. A combined army, French, British and German, must immediately march on Moscow. Britain must supply one hundred thousand men, France two hundred and fifty thousand, and Germany seven hundred and fifty thousand. The Allies must restore all her arms to Germany for this campaign."

"But," I protested, when I had recovered from my pardonable surprise, "would it not be permissible to suppose that having got the British and French armies well on their way to Russia the larger German army might turn and devour them?"

"There would be guarantees," said Ludendorff, who possibly had forgotten the Belgian "scrap of paper." "With one common desire for the common good of the civilised world, France, Germany and Britain could work together."

"But that," I replied, "would mean an international staff and a supreme command. Now you, I presume, would lead the German army?"

"It—er—might be so—of course."

"Well, then, would you be willing to serve under Field Marshal Foch?" Was I mistaken, or *did* a faint spark of life glimmer for a moment in the eyes that stared at me? If so, it died at birth, but when Ludendorff answered it was in a more staccato though no less sepulchral tone.

"No, the German people would not consent to that. No, I would not."

"Then the common desire for the common good would not be sufficient for *that*," I said, and, as he did

not reply, I went on, "Your Excellency could hardly expect—things being as they are—that Field Marshal Foch would consent to act under a German command? Well! what about Field Marshal Haig?"

Ludendorff deliberated for a moment. "Yes, under Haig, I *would* take command, and the German people would agree."

I believe Ludendorff's fear of Bolshevism to have been absolutely genuine. He was convinced that the only safety for Europe lay in a combined march on Moscow and in putting every mother's son of the Trotsky-Lenin pack to the sword. I reminded him that it was he, himself, who had been instrumental in sending Lenin and Trotsky from Switzerland to Russia to bring about the very conditions in Russia which he now so feared for the rest of Europe. He admitted it, but said that no one had foreseen the present development.

Poor Ludendorff! He was trying to disguise even from himself the thought at the back of his mind: Ludendorff again commanding an organised German force of three-quarters of a million men.

In a cold, courteous, but deathly way he said good-bye.

I duly sent a report of this conversation to England, where I have no doubt it received adequate consideration. With it I enclosed the report of a more rational talk I had had on the same subject with General Max Hoffmann.

General Hoffmann was a mountainous man, with something of the shaggy appearance of a polar bear. He astounded me from the first by the purely sporting

view he appeared to take of the War. He never discussed the rights and wrongs of the cause of it. Only the play of the game, the skill of the leadership, the finesse of the moves and the comparison of the qualities of the competing forces seemed to have interest for him. In 1920 Lord Haig sent me the English edition of his *Dispatches*. Looking at it one day in my apartment, General Hoffmann said that it should be translated and published in German, as it would be a most valuable complement to the German publications on the Great War. Shortly after this I found a publisher and Lord Haig arranged for the German edition—the profits of which were to go to the funds of the British Legion.

All went well until one day the distracted publisher came to me and said that he had had three translations made but none had conveyed a clear conception of the technical details of the work.

Meeting General Hoffmann in Unter den Linden the following day, I mentioned the situation to him.

“A work like that can only be satisfactorily translated by a soldier with thorough knowledge of military technique and higher tactics,” he said.

I suggested that it could scarcely be expected that Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Mackensen or Falkenhayn would consider with enthusiasm an offer to translate the War Dispatches of their former adversary.

“Well—what about—Hoffmann?” was the surprising reply of the big man with the bristling eyebrows.

“You? . . . *You* would?”

“Yes—I would,” he said.

And he did.

Thus it came about that the military dispatches of Field Marshal Earl Haig were, shortly after their appearance in England, offered to the German public excellently translated by General Max Hoffmann, the hero of "Tannenberg" and the "Iron Fist" of Brest-Litovsk.

When he brought me his "Foreword," he said he was afraid Lord Haig might take offence because of his remarks on the new light the *Dispatches* shed on the strength of the British Army at certain periods. It was so much greater than had been believed.

I told Lord Haig of this and he wrote in return the following, which both surprised and convinced General Hoffmann :

"I see nothing at all offensive in the latter : indeed it is rather amusing than otherwise ! So as far as I am concerned, please tell them to carry on. I hope that he has given an honest translation of the text of the Dispatches. . .

"As regards Hoffmann's note on the strength of the British and German Divisions at the end of the War, you will be able to give him the actual figures ; Divisions were very much reduced in numbers, and so were our Battalions, Companies and Batteries — 4 guns instead of 6, etc. I don't believe I was at all unfair to the Germans in what I wrote in the Dispatches on this head."



## CHAPTER XX

## SAN REMO AND AFTER

ONE of the conditions imposed upon Germany by the Peace Treaty was that the strength of her standing army was not to exceed 100,000. The Government were proceeding with the reduction of the Army to the best of their ability, but were faced with the impossibility of finding employment for the demobilised soldiers. An army of this size was less than a third of that of France, and less than half of that of Great Britain, countries with smaller populations and both geographically situated to justify the maintenance of a smaller army than Germany required. At first Germany was not seriously perturbed by this particular condition, believing that the impossibility of maintaining order and discipline with so small a military force even within her own boundaries must soon be clear to the allied nations. Gradually, however, the fear grew upon her that this "pound of flesh" actually was to be demanded from her and gave rise to grave anxiety.

In May 1920 an international conference was held at San Remo. Mr. Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, anxious that a verbatim report direct from Germany should be submitted, asked General Bingham to send someone to him at San Remo. I was sent.

I had always been in the closest touch with my chief and knew his views. He was strongly of the opinion that an immediate reduction of the German army to the strength laid down by the Treaty would be inadvisable.

I arrived after a long and difficult journey. I was wakened at San Remo by a messenger telling me that it was already eight o'clock, and that I was to breakfast with Mr. Lloyd George at nine.

In the room to which I had been bidden I found myself one of at least a dozen. Mr. Balfour, Sir Henry Wilson, Sir Philip Sassoon, Mr. Philip Kerr (now Lord Lothian), Mr. (now Sir) Maurice Hankey and others. Mr. J. T. Davies, one of the P.M.'s private secretaries, took me in hand and introduced me all round. Then the Prime Minister came in. I had never seen him before. He came to me first and said :

"I know who you are. I have read all your reports, and have found them not only interesting but most valuable."

I was naturally pleased. I sat on his right, next to Mr. Balfour, and for an hour we discussed the condition, the possibilities and the difficulties of Germany. I had often heard of the charm of Mr. Lloyd George. I felt it very strongly.

Sir Henry Wilson sat opposite me. I repeated to him the tribute General von Kluck had paid to the British Expeditionary Force.

"Good old von Kluck," said Sir Henry. "My God ! That little man made me hop about pretty quickly at one time."

Before leaving the room the Prime Minister told

me to write a summary of my report and give it to him that afternoon. I wrote the following :

“ It is useless attempting to deal with Germany as a normal factor at the present moment. Physically, mentally and morally the people are affected. If Germany is to be treated as a criminal, it must be as a criminal who at present is in no condition to carry out her sentence to the full. To get anything out of Germany eventually it is necessary to put something in now. Before Germany works for us she must be given the strength and the where-withal. If not she will rot and the question whether such a plague spot in the heart of Europe could be tolerated is not unworthy of consideration.

“ Germany has a surplus population of 20,000,000 for whom she can scarce provide food, employment or clothing. The demobilisation of the army will mean the throwing of countless men on the street. These men, who have only the memory of five years' misery, with a ghastly failure at the end, will join and support any movement against a Government who can do nothing more for them than this Government will be able to do if the Treaty is to be carried out to the letter at present.

“ If a Government without force is no Government for a healthy nation, how hopeless must its position be in a country in the state in which Germany is at this moment.

“ The people must be controlled—but they must be treated with a hair of the dog that bit them. The complete collapse of that dog—the military

system—has thoroughly demoralised the country, and no government devoid of *moral* force is going to justify its position without force of some kind. Given the physical force, the moral force will follow, for this Government is composed of sensible, honest men, who, if they be afforded the opportunity of doing something for the country, may yet prove equal to the task of pulling their people out of the mire into which they were steadily sinking. If they could offer the prospect of employment for the surplus population, of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, there would be a chance of recovery for the country—recovery to a degree sufficient at any rate to ensure that an honest attempt would be made to carry out the terms of the Treaty, and with the probability of a certain measure of success.

“The present Government are honest in their intentions with regard to the Treaty. Not possibly from any spirit of repentance, but because they realise that without the help of the Entente they are doomed, and they know that they can expect no help unless they show their readiness to carry out their contracts, so far as they are able.

“Military menace, for years to come, may be regarded as a bogey. This should be accepted as an absolute fact, and Germany’s request for an addition—at least as a temporary measure—to the 100,000 laid down should be given serious consideration.”

To this I appended figures given me by the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, General von

Seeckt, showing the number of troops which it had been necessary to employ in quelling the various revolts and risings which had broken out in the country since the Republic had been proclaimed :—

45,000 to cope with the revolt in Berlin in 1919.

33,000 to overthrow the Communistic Republic  
in Munich, 1919.

15,000 in Hamburg, July 1919.

40,000 in the Ruhr warfare.

12,000 in the Saxon Bolshevist rising.

The consideration asked for was given and an addition of 50,000 men for a period of six months was granted by the Allies to Germany. Not all they had hoped for, but it was a welcome and useful gesture.

The unruly elements took the view that if the Government were to be supported by the Allies it might be as well, on the whole, to walk warily. It would no longer be wise to consider them merely a ghost on the roof without the means of materialising itself to a power.

I spent a week in San Remo. The winter and spring in Berlin had been bitterly cold, cheerless and sinister. At San Remo all was warm, friendly, genial and colourful. Not until now had the difference between losing or winning a war been fully borne in upon me.

Then back to Germany, where the question of a national anthem was presenting a problem in Berlin. There was a general desire by the people to have some tune definitely recognised. "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Hail to the Victor crowned with Laurels."

was, to say the least of it, inappropriate. "Deutschland über Alles" (advanced as the expression of a hope rather than, as in pre-war days, a statement of fact) was first favourite and gradually it became the practice to play this on suitable occasions. It was interesting to watch its progress to general acceptance. In the Adlon, where we frequently dined, the orchestra was encouraged—in the usual way—to close the programme of music with it. At first a few Germans rose. After a few performances all the Germans in the restaurant stood to attention. As there had been no official recognition of the tune as the national anthem naturally none of the foreigners moved.

This aroused the wrath of the Germans, who used to shout "Get up or get out!" It was most unpleasant for us who had no wish to be rude, but who had no intention of being bullied into doing anything unreasonable.

One evening—I was dining with one of my colleagues—we noticed that a cousin of the ex-Kaiser, Prince Joachim Albrecht of Prussia, surrounded by a number of satellites, appeared to be hatching some mischief. We decided to go to General Bingham and ask for a ruling on the vexed question of "to stand or not to stand." As we left the dining room the band struck up the tune and the Germans sprang to their feet. At a table near Prince Joachim Albrecht sat two French officers with their wives. They naturally continued with their meal. The Prince lifted the candelabra from his table and hurled it at the inoffensive French. This was evidently a pre-arranged signal. Glasses, bottles,

chairs, spoons and cruets followed the candlesticks. The hotel staff behaved excellently. They formed a ring round the table and helped the two hysterical women through a window into the garden. Inside a free fight took place, the waiters and some sporting foreigners ranging themselves on the side of the two Frenchmen. Those not taking part stood on chairs and tables cheering and booing according to their nationality. A Hohenlohe Prince took one of his shoes off (why, when there were plenty of bottles about ?) and rolled on the floor with a French captain, beating him about the face. The Frenchman retaliated with nails and teeth. The waiters and the French won in the end. Joachim Albrecht and his "merrie men" were thrown out of the hotel and forbidden to re-enter it. The authorities tried the case, convicted the Prince and fined him. He left Berlin for a year and thereafter peace reigned in the restaurant. But this incident brought the question of a national anthem to a head and some little time later it was announced that "Deutschland über Alles" would be officially adopted as the German national hymn.

In the interregnum it was forbidden to be played, greatly to the annoyance of the particular type of Berliner who could afford to frequent the Adlon. The orchestra on one occasion during this period played an arrangement of "Home, Sweet Home." A gradual muttering of protest rose to a clamour and a dozen Germans marched upon the bewildered band. They ordered them to cease "*diese verdammte Melodie*" at once. If they could not have the German national

anthem played they were not going to be insulted by the British National Anthem!

A still more serious insult to the French was that provoked by the following incident. On the French National Day, July 14th, 1920, the Tricolour was unfurled for the first time since 1914 over the French Embassy. The ceremony was impressive, but no sooner was the flag floating in the breeze than it disappeared. A German youth had concealed himself on the roof, cut down the flag, and bolted with it over the housetops. The French demanded as an apology that a company of the Reichswehr should parade and salute the flag. A new flag was procured. General Nollet stood with the French Ambassador to take the salute. Late, in muddy boots and dirty old fatigue uniforms, the company slouched past all out of step and alignment. Once past the saluting point they smartened up and in perfect discipline marched on singing "Deutschland über Alles."

Of course more apologies were demanded. But the Germans had had their fun and "what was one apology more or less?"—a point of view which is human if not ethical.



## CHAPTER XXI

## DARMSTADT AND BERLIN

IN no way did the desire for peace manifest itself more clearly than in the manner in which the mass of Germany settled down after the convulsion of the Kapp *Putsch*. The Communists were still to be reckoned with, but the welcome concession of an additional 50,000 men to the strength of the standing army was a powerful weapon to brandish in the face of an unruly element. The Government wielded it with energy and reborn confidence.

In July I was granted seven days' leave and spent it in making a short tour of the Black Forest.

From Heidelberg it was but a "cat's spring" to Darmstadt which, just a year previously, I had entered through French occupied territory. So I made my way there. The little town had come to life again. There was an air of content about it. "Arm, aber zufrieden" ("Poor, but contented") was the general expression of existing conditions.

I lunched in the same restaurant as I had done on my last visit. The menu was more varied and the *rosbif* no longer belied its race. The landlord was pleasant and communicative.

I asked him about the Grand Duke.

No, he said, they had not restored him—too many

other things to think about, and the Grand Duke was so busy that he hadn't time either. But he was all right. In a way the revolution had made him more popular. When the leaders of the Socialists forced their way into the palace in November 1918 to depose him, the Grand Duke met them and before they had time to speak he held out his hands to them and said : " You all look so hot and tired, come in and have something to eat and some beer." So they all had some beer—and then some more beer, and they all talked things over peacably. The Grand Duke was sensible and when he realised how things were going in the country he accepted the new situation like a gentleman."

I announced my presence by telephone to his Royal Highness and received in return an invitation to spend the following day with him and his family.

This time I found the gates of the palace open. Count Hardenburg, one of the Grand Duke's gentlemen, met me at the door and took me through the house to a wide open terrace looking on to the garden, where I found my host and the Grand Duchess with their two sons, aged about eleven and thirteen. There were also Prince Philipp of Hesse, and a lachrymose-looking lady who I eventually learned was Princess William of Wied, the wife of that Prince who for a few pre-war weeks was almost, but not quite, King of Albania.

I don't think Princess William had a sense of humour. If she had it must have been mislaid in Albania. In the evening, discovering that she was interested in the occult, the Grand Duke suggested

table-turning and planchette. This was a great success, especially the writing machine, which became personal to a degree that was embarrassing. When it was at its worst, and Princess William was "all creepy down the spine," I caught the Grand Duke's eye. He winked.

The Grand Duchess, who had been a Princess Solms, was a complete contrast to her husband, the kind of contrast that goes to make a perfect pair. She was quiet and restful. He was excitable and seldom still. He was always amusing and entertaining. She was interested and appreciative. The boys were too young to be much in evidence. The elder particularly gave promise of great good looks—a promise since fulfilled.

After luncheon the Grand Duke played the piano to us extremely well. He had invented a new kind of instrument, oddly shaped and strung, on which he performed with all the taste of an artist if not all the skill of a professional musician. Luncheon had been more than ample, and after the music we all went to sleep.

Later I had a long talk with the Grand Duke and when we had finished with the country as a topic, he spoke of his sister, the Tsarina. He did not believe that she was dead.

"We were so near to one another," he said, "that the one always knew instinctively when there was anything amiss with the other. I must have felt it if she had been killed—and I have not."

We dined on a stone terrace above a wild rose garden. The party had grown since luncheon.

Prince and Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse had motored over from Friedrichshof, and a couple of former Ladies in Waiting had been invited. We had cold meats, potato salad and a strawberry *torte*. It was the most delicious kind of evening. Warm, still, perfume laden.

There were a few minutes of restful quiet while we drank coffee. In the distance, great enough to make it quite undisturbing, a pleasant voice was singing lazily, "Ich hab' mein Herz in Heidelberg verloren." The song died away, and then there was only the rustle of the rambler rose leaves.

"Isn't it odd," said the Grand Duke suddenly, clawing at his ankle, "that sitting here like this . . . it almost seems as if the only trouble in the world were . . . a mosquito."

By the autumn of 1920, the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control had already been several months at work.

General Bingham, his Chief of Staff, Colonel Anstey, the A.D.C. and myself, still had headquarters in the Adlon. Some of the members had apartments and the Commission had been leavened by the arrival of several female relatives. Entertaining commenced on a wide, if not on a grand scale. The low cost of living, to us who had stable currency, made such entertaining an easy matter, and the dining rooms of the Adlon, Esplanade and Bristol, began to take on almost a pre-war appearance. By this time, at the request of the German Government, we had ceased to wear uniform. It was wiser for the sake of

our safety, they said. And no doubt they were right.

The spectacle of a crowd of well-dressed people making merry in the public restaurants in a ruined country naturally gave rise to false reports of German prosperity ; it would, however, on examination have been found that the few Germans present were guests and not hosts.

Week-ends away from work in Berlin were often spent by the British on the Wannsee, one of the stretches of water that connects Berlin with Potsdam. Sailing was the popular sport. Admiral Charlton, Chief of the Naval Commission, and several of his officers were the first to have boats. Admiral Charlton, by the way, caused the greatest astonishment in Berlin by his unusual mode of locomotion. He brought an electric "scooter" to Germany, and the sight of this bluff British sailor scooting along the asphalt of the Linden, down the Wilhelm Strasse to his official headquarters, was a never-failing source of joy to the amazed inhabitants and of anxiety to the traffic police.

Official entertaining really only commenced after the arrival of Lord and Lady D'Abernon. Lord D'Abernon's appointment as Ambassador was not hailed with unfeigned delight by the Germans. At the time it was made it was realised that finance would play an all-important part in the squaring of matters between their country and the Allies. The appointment of a diplomat *de carrière* would have been more acceptable than that of a financial expert like Lord D'Abernon. There was a feeling—not perhaps openly expressed but certainly prevalent—that they were

going to be outwitted. They were, however, to learn that it was exactly that quality in Lord D'Abernon which they most feared, his amazing efficiency in financial matters, that enabled him to understand and sympathise with their difficulties and justified him in making—often in the face of severe opposition—many successful attempts to lessen the burden imposed upon Germany.

Lord D'Abernon was magnificent. White-haired, white-bearded, carrying himself straight as a die. His clothes were always shapeless, he never wore a collar stud, but in spite of these sartorial defects he always looked regal. At tennis, golf and badminton, he put most of his juniors to shame—and he was close on seventy. He was an internationally acknowledged art-expert, he was musical, he spoke several languages better than many people speak their own. But he had something else to his credit, which, perhaps more than all, accounted for his immediate success—he was the husband of Lady D'Abernon, and she was one of the most beautiful and accomplished women of her time.

I remember—before the War it was—after dinner one evening with Lord Rosebery at Mentmore, the male portion of the party were discussing contemporary feminine beauty. Eventually a long list of the world's most lovely women was reduced to four : Georgiana, Countess of Dudley ; Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland ; the Duchess of Leinster and her sister, now Lady D'Abernon. My own vote was given enthusiastically for Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, who was then the most beautiful creature I had ever

seen or known. But I had not seen Lady D'Abernon then !

There was a glamour about the Embassy from the day the D'Abernons arrived. The first reception ushered in hospitality on a most gracious scale. The reluctance which the Germans officially showed to being entertained by their former foes was gradually overcome, and the Embassy became a clearing house for international difficulties. The Germans came to the belief that the diplomatic representative of Great Britain was taking a kindly and practical interest in their own difficulties and endeavours.

At the Italian Embassy were Count and Countess de Bosdari. Countess de Bosdari was the outstanding personality among the châtelaines of the foreign embassies. She was long and thin, and she curved backwards in the most astonishing manner when she walked. Her *décolletage* was always extreme, but deficiencies of corsage were supposedly compensated for by one black glove invariably worn on the left arm, and by a "Toby" ruff of gauzy material and surprising dimensions, without which she was never seen. A long neck, hooked nose, big black eyes were all surmounted by a brown coiffure, which alternated in style according to her Excellency's mood, from a "slick back" to that of a mediæval page.

She was a splendid, vital person, *une vraie grande dame*, and when she and Count de Bosdari left Berlin it was as though some bright lamp had been put out.

At the Dutch Legation Baron and Baroness Gevers were the first to include Germans, French and British at the same official parties. The dangerous

mixture was tried out at afternoon receptions, which the capable Baroness managed with great skill. The German and neutral elements were carefully shepherded into one end of the reception room, while the "enemy" were segregated at the other. The hostess flitted anxiously and impartially from one group to the other, always keeping a watchful eye open to see that no careless lamb butted into the forbidden pen. After a few weeks, under her genial care, the two flocks gradually merged, and the benign Baroness could relax with satisfaction at the sight of the tolerance of the sheep for the goats.

I was first introduced to the Dutch Legation by Count Valentine Henckel von Donnersmarck, a man who, in those early days, laboured assiduously to get the Allies to understand the true condition of Germany. This could naturally not be done without frequent meetings and discussions. The old die-hard Prussian viewed any peaceful, unofficial association with the enemy as something akin to treason and some of the more conservative clubs went the length of suspending the membership of those who were known to—or suspected of even so far forgetting themselves as to—have anything whatsoever to do with officers of the Entente. In a way one could understand this point of view, but the fact remains that the censors would have been of more use to their country had they gone and done likewise. Count Henckel von Donnersmarck, General von Kluck, Colonel von Schweinitz, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Prince Münster, Prince Lichnowsky, Prince (Hansel) Pless, General Hoffmann, Herr von Kühlmann—I take these at



random from a long list in my memory of names which should be remembered by Germany with appreciation and gratitude.

Another delightful neutral Mecca was the Danish Legation. Their Excellencies Count and Countess Karl von Moltke were very popular and attractive. She was an American from Boston, a tall regal woman, whose stateliness was quite devoid of stiffness. He, had he been chosen only for his good looks, would have entirely justified his appointment. He was one of the handsomest men in the service. In spite of the suffering which chronic and painful rheumatism caused him, he was always charming, witty and good humoured. He was reputed to be dangerously democratic. Certainly at his house one might meet extreme Socialists one night, but on the next one was probably asked to dine with princes of the blood. It was at a ball at this Legation that Mr. Houghton, the American Ambassador, and Mrs. Houghton made their first social appearance. This was at the commencement of the first post-war American Ambassador's long and successful term of office in the German capital.

Mrs. Houghton, aided by her vivacious daughter, Matilda, was soon one of the most popular hostesses. Her dances were wonderful and will never be forgotten by her guests—Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Turks, Jews, Greeks—I cannot recall any Esquimaux, but of a surety there must have been—they were all there.

As in the case of Lord D'Abernon, this was Mr. Houghton's first Diplomatic post, and America has no



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less reason than Britain to congratulate herself on the appointment.

It was not only at the Embassy that American hospitality was dispensed on a lavish scale. Who of the fortunate will forget how Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Wilson in the Loring Dresel's time introduced Newport to Wannsee. Those wonderful summer week-ends—luncheon, tea, dinner and dancing in the villa by the lake. Bathing, boating, tennis, yachting. Then the other two Counsellors, each the lucky possessor of a beautiful wife. Warren and Mrs. Robbins whose parties (especially when she sang—she had a glorious voice with a slight touch of huskiness, which, if it detracted from its purity, added to its charm) were the most delightful of their kind. If ever a square hole was fitted with a square peg it was when Washington fixed on these two to run the Ceremonial department at the White House. "Dick" Pennoyer, the other Counsellor, brought one of our most lovely Englishwomen to the Embassy in the Wilhelms Platz. He had married Lady Ingestre (Lady Winifred Paget) and it was always a pleasant thing for us British to know that we were so exquisitely represented at the American Embassy. There were many other delightful Americans officially in Berlin in those days. The Parker-Gilberts—she, so exotic, with the delicious Southern drawl,—the Stewart-Johnstons, the Lansdownes (he commanded the ill-fated "Shenandoah" and died in the wreck of his airship). These—and how many more with whom we all associated in such *bon accord*. Only a very large country could have spared so many excellent people at the same time.

The Belgian Legation, with Count and Countess de la Faille, the Japanese and Spanish Embassies, the Swedish, Polish and Rumanian Legations all opened hospitable doors. Language presented little difficulty, nearly everyone spoke at least one other than his own. On one occasion, however, I was completely stuck. I was seated at an official dinner between two Japanese. Three hours without the effort of making conversation. They enjoyed it as much as I did.

The translation from one language to another sometimes had humorous results. I was telephoned to one evening by the lady who was to be my hostess for dinner. She spoke volubly and excitedly in English with a very foreign accent.

"I am in despair," she wailed. "We were to have been fourteen at dinner. Mme. 'X' has failed me at the last moment as she has a sickness. Now we are thirteen, and that is impossible."

I suggested that I stayed away and so solve the problem.

"No ! I tell you what I wish you to do. You must find a loose woman and bring her with you. I know I could appeal to no one better because you know them all !"

## CHAPTER XXII

## ROYAL EXILES

OUR official duties in Germany, however, were never entirely dissociated from strain. No matter how one endeavoured to gild the pill of disarmament, there was always the natural resentment of a humiliated people to be reckoned with. It was a constant mental irritant of which one was often unconscious, but which was never quite dormant, and it was difficult to prevent this from affecting one's judgment.

General Bingham's policy was that by scrupulous fairness, rather than by "conquering hero" tactics, the tedious course would be more successfully traversed. It was by no means easy in those days to maintain an equilibrium either of judgment or justice. The Press did not help. British public opinion was, as I have said, fed on an unwholesome mixture of exaggeration and invention which did nothing to ease the task of the man who had to do the job.

In September, 1920, things were reasonably quiet. A new coalition government, with Fehrenbach as Chancellor and with a sound economist, Joseph Wirth, as Minister of Finance, had in June replaced the Hermann Müller Government. No definite arrangement as to reparations had as yet been elaborated.

This was to be further discussed during September by an International Committee of experts at Brussels. Inflation was daily becoming more serious, but the people were by no means yet alive to the disaster ahead. The popular belief seemed to be that so long as there were printing machines to produce more paper money there was nothing much to worry about. The pound at the beginning of September was worth 250 marks; during the month the mark fell to 325, and until the end of the following May remained round about this level. The absence of serious fluctuation for such a period gave rise to a popular hope that the mark might after all recover. Industry was booming. Exports were increasing daily—as was only natural with inflation. Things were in fact looking a little better all round.

I felt I needed a change—a week somewhere where I would not hear “shop” talked. Switzerland was a neutral country—and it wasn’t far. A comfortable sleeper took me as far as Munich, and so to Lake Constance. A little tub steamer across the lake and I was in Switzerland. Three hours further on—Lucerne. As I looked at the lake and gazed at the peak of Pilatus, I could already feel the cobwebs disappearing.

As I drove round the head of the lake on my way from the station, two girls attractively dressed in white and carrying tennis rackets passed me. They were closely followed by two elderly gentlemen. I swung myself nearly out of the taxi in my astonishment. Mr. Lloyd George—the Prime Minister

himself, accompanied by Mr. Hamar Greenwood (now Lord Greenwood)—was following close on the heels of Miss Megan Lloyd George and Miss Frances Stevenson—one of the Prime Minister's secretaries. As there was no official conference (so far as I was aware) scheduled for Lucerne, I could only presume that the fatigued Prime Minister had also felt the call of a neutral country.

I was standing in the vestibule of the Hotel National waiting to be shown to my room, when a remark made *sotto voce* at my elbow attracted my attention to the two people standing near me.

"Say, King! have you any objection to giving me the dope on this incident between Lloyd George and yourself? My paper will give you a square deal."

The speaker was obviously an American journalist; and "King," a tall impressive-looking man of soldierly bearing, was probably, I thought, some foreign politician or official.

I did not see the "dope" administered—if indeed it was administered, for at that moment I was whisked off to my room on the fourth floor.

In the dining room of the "National" the *mâitre d'hôtel* whispered to me as he led me to a seat that he had reserved the most interesting table in the room for me. It seemed, however, just one small table in a corner of a large and crowded restaurant. Its one distinction, so far as I could see, was that it was the only single table in the room, and its insignificance was accentuated by the gorgeousness and grandeur of



the table adjacent, large, and set out with about a dozen covers.

I was mildly speculating on the type and variety of my prospective neighbours, when a slight commotion caused my attention to be focussed on a party just entering the room. The little procession passed through to the table on my left. The host was "Mr. King." I noticed that the little party remained standing until he and the handsome, sad-faced, middle-aged woman, who was placed opposite to him, had seated themselves.

My neighbours seemed to be quite unconscious of the stir they had caused. They were a quiet little community. Two girls, scarcely out of their teens, were quite lovely. Fortunately for me, they were seated so that I could gaze at them without any semblance of rudeness. Something vaguely familiar about the appearance of one of the other ladies, whose back was towards me, intrigued me, but not until dinner was over was my curiosity satisfied. She turned as she rose from the table and, as she saw me, the recognition was mutual.

It was Princess Victoria of Schaumburg-Lippe, the second sister of the German Emperor.

I stood up and, I suppose, looked my astonishment. She allowed the others to pass on, and, coming a step nearer me, whispered :

"Are you here—*working*?"

"No—*playing*."

"Good. I'm here with my sister Queen Sophie and her family. Come and speak to me afterwards in the lounge."

The *mâitre d'hôtel*, impressed evidently by the fact that I had been noticed, came and offered me gratuitous information about the party.

"Mr. King" was none other than King Constantine of Greece ; his *vis-à-vis* was Queen Sophie. The two girls were Princess Helen—later Princess Helen of Rumania—and Princess Irene. A sturdily-built youngster of about eighteen was Prince Paul, the youngest son.

"We take care of all the exiled royalties," proudly announced the *mâitre d'hôtel*. "Look down there—that old lady who looks like nobody—the Queen of Naples. At the next table to her an Austrian Archduke and Duchess. And—who do you think that is? No one less than the Infanta Eulalie of Spain. They all get on so well together when they are sad. How do you say, sir—you English—'A little trouble make the whole world kin'—hein?"

That week at Lucerne I was enjoying myself in wholly pleasing surroundings.

One day, on the tennis courts, I crossed to pick up a ball from under the feet of Miss Megan Lloyd George, who was playing on the next court.

"I see you have gone over to the enemy," she said.

"I'm being neutral this week," I said.

She looked across at my partner, Princess Helen of Greece.

"I don't believe you—she's lovely." And in truth, she was.

She was at that time looking forward with some alarm to a visit she was soon to pay to Queen Marie of Rumania. She had been cooped up in

exile for nearly three years, and the prospect of this plunge into the unknown was full of strange possibilities. Her mother, Queen Sophie, was frankly unhappy about this visit. She suspected the ulterior motive with which Princess Helen was to be taken to Rumania. Prince Carol had just been extricated from a mesalliance which had augured ill for his career. His future was a problem. Married to someone of royal blood—especially if she were beautiful—what a solution !

Poor Queen Sophie ! “ I could do nothing,” she said to me years afterwards, “ but pray. Alas ! my prayers were not answered ? ”

Princess Helen went—and remained. And all the world knows the rest.

I found H.R.H. Princess Victoria Alexandrowna Marie of Schaumburg-Lippe in the lounge—alone.

“ Let’s go and walk on the promenade,” she suggested. I had met and dined with her twice previously in her own home, and these visits had left so pleasant an impression on me that I was unfeignedly glad to be with her again.

“ One of the many things I am supposed *not* to do,” she told me, when I had wrapped a flimsy bit of chiffon around her shoulders, “ is to walk alone with a man, so—come on.”

“ It’ll be all right about you,” she assured me. “ You see, my relatives all adore Aunt Helena ” (Princess Christian) “ so they think any friend of her’s must be *sans reproche*. I’ve told them about you

and you've been passed O.K. and asked to tea tomorrow."

The first time I had met Princess Victoria was about a year previously. She was swinging herself off a sixteen-hand hunter in the stable yard of the Palais Schaumburg, at Bonn, part of which at that time was occupied by a British Military Staff. She came striding up the pathway from the stables looking like an Amazon. Five foot ten, strong, slim and sinewy. Her dark hair was blowing untidily about her weather-beaten face, her riding skirt flapping unheeded about her long leather-encased legs. On the steps of the house she turned, stuck two fingers in her mouth and emitted from between two rows of strong white teeth, an ear-splitting whistle which brought a couple of Alsatian police dogs bounding to her.

She walked into the room with the two hounds. Fortunately she had a hold on each of their collars, for they were evidently longing to be at me. But she was muscular, and the dogs were obedient.

"Be nice to him—both of you—he is a friend." The dogs looked at me for verification, concluded she was right and sniffed round me contentedly.

"Poor Princess Vicky"—as her relatives affectionately called her. A good deal has been written about her since those happy days in Lucerne, but little by anyone who knew her well. Her marriage to the Russian Zoubkoff and her tragic death in poverty are about all that the world in general remembers.

After the revolution she determined to live her own life in exactly the way she wished.

"So long as there was any advantage in being

Royalty," she said to me, "I was willing to pay the price. But why go on boring and tiring myself to death, kicking a football after the game is over? There's no point in it. My life was terribly restricted. I never knew the world was so full of amusing, interesting people. And those I did know were never natural with me. If Germany were still a monarchy I should observe the conventions, accepting the drawbacks with the advantages. But now we are a Republic, all the material advantages I had are gone. Let me have at least the one thing I can take in exchange—freedom. Freedom to go as I please—to come as I please, to know whom I please, to do as I please. I shall have to pay, of course. Already all the 'cats' about are casting disapproving eyes on me because I'm on friendly terms with the British officers. How can I help it? My house is the Headquarters of the British Staff. The Union Jack is flying above it. My Uncle Arthur (the Duke of Connaught) is a British Field Marshal. He came here officially a short time back and I ran out and hugged him. And, my dear man, he looked perfectly horrified. Of course, now that I think of it, it must have been rather embarrassing for a British Field Marshal to be publicly hugged by a sister of the Emperor of Germany before Peace had even been signed. But I hadn't thought of it like that. I only thought of Uncle Arthur, and I expected him only to remember Little Vicky. Why can't we all be natural like that? I've lived for more than fifty years as 'Victoria Princess of Prussia,' and, oh! I do want to live the rest of my life with the freedom of Mrs. Brown.

“When I was about three years old I remember being sent in one morning to see my grandmother, the Empress Augusta.<sup>1</sup> After greeting her, I was dancing my way out of the room. She called me to her and reproved me severely. ‘One goes *walking* out of my presence ; one does not *hop* !’ My life has been lived ‘walking in the Presence’ ! But now”—and she said it so pathetically—“surely *now* I can hop a little.”

She was the best company in the world : a naturally joyous nature. At fifty-five she was ready for the fun from which all her life hitherto she had been precluded by her position. She loved “mothering the English boys.” Poor Princess Victoria, she had even been denied children. She danced, played tennis with the young English officers, and found in association with them that genial, care-free atmosphere she had never before known. She decorated their Christmas table for them. Red, white and blue. They were her mother’s people, she wanted to be kind to them. The War was over—they had all suffered. Had not the time for healing come ?

When Princess Victoria was young and romantic she was engaged to Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who was to have become King of Bulgaria ; and then, at the happiest moment of her life, they took him away from her. He was not going to be useful enough to Germany. They gave her an old, dull, unpleasant man instead.

She had a very potent charm. Everyone who knew her loved her. It became the fashion to speak of her

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Emperor William I.

as "poor unhappy Princess Victoria." Was she unhappy? I doubt it. She married Zoubkoff, and for a time was—as she wrote to me—"radiantly happy with Prince Charming." She did things she had always wanted to do. He took her riding, on a long tour, pillion, on a motor cycle. She was thrown off and half killed. They picked her up from the roadside and nursed her devotedly in a little roadside inn. She loved it. It was all new. When the Russian alliance turned out a failure, as it was bound to do, she did not lie weeping on the ashes of disaster. Life was full of untold intriguing possibilities, and weaving them—she died.

That night at Lucerne Princess Victoria was in irrepressibly good spirits, delighted to be on holiday, her first trip abroad since the War.

"But even here," she said, "I have to mind my P's and Q's. My relatives keep telling me that I don't know when—how do you call it?—to draw the line. It's they who draw the line. They would like to tie me up with it. Why—when I want to forget it—should I always have to remember who I am?"

I took her back to the hotel. A band was playing in the ballroom. We looked around. The Greeks had gone to bed.

"Shall we?" asked Princess Victoria, looking at the whirling throng.

"Well . . ." I hesitated for a moment in contemplation of the spectacle of an officer of the Allied Commission of Disarmament dancing with the sister

of the ex-Kaiser in a neutral country in the year 1920.

"He who hesitates . . ." said her Royal Highness. "You're young and I'm just beginning life, and"—she laughed—"I want to be happy."

"It's a command, Madam," I said, making a cowardly concession to conscience—and off we went !



## CHAPTER XXIII

## KING CONSTANTINE

THE first of the exiled Greek courtiers with whom I made acquaintance was M. Streit, who had been the King's foreign minister in Athens. Here surely, thought I, is the fountain-head of truth.

But M. Streit was no easy fish to play. It was clear that he deeply resented and mistrusted the English, and every effort I made to learn from him was coldly, politely, but firmly discouraged. So I gave him up for that day.

At four o'clock on the day after our walk Princess Victoria took me to the royal apartments and presented me to their Majesties. The other members of the family came in a few minutes later and we had tea. The eldest son, Crown Prince George, had arrived that morning in Lucerne and joined us. There was little formality. The younger generation was full of fun and in the highest spirits. The King and Queen were quiet, but evidently getting a lot of pleasure out of the frank enjoyment of the youngsters. When I left them it was with a determination to learn all I could, as soon as I could, of the events which had led up to the forcing into exile of such a man as King Constantine. Only from M. Streit could I get what I wanted, and to him I

went. But it was not with insinuation or innuendo that I was now to bait my line. I felt that M. Streit must be satisfied as to my motive before he would part with anything. So I told him that I had been with the King, that I had heard the other side of the story, but felt that I was still ignorant of the truth, and I asked him if he would help me to get the right angle of the matter.

During that week I saw a lot of this pleasant Greek statesman—and gradually heard the whole story. A story of the brow-beating and blackmailing of a small country by the bigger ones. How Greece, that had been ravaged by a dozen years of almost incessant war, had been pressed by M. Venizelos and the Allies into participation in a World War from which she could hope to reap no benefit. How King Constantine, threatened on the one side by the Kaiser if he did not ally himself with the Central Powers, driven to bay by the others, struggled in valiant, if hopeless, endeavour to maintain the neutrality of the people whose interests were all that he had at heart ; struggled until the Allies' shells drove him, his wife with her baby in her arms, and his children, into the flight that had ended in their present exile.

That much I learned from the Greek foreign minister. But the truth ? It was long afterwards—after the publication of the Kautsky documents in Berlin—after I had been in Athens myself—that, contrary to my natural inclination, I was convinced that a grave injustice had been done.

Before I left there were rumours of a movement to

restore King Constantine, and the entourage spoke hopefully and confidently of a return to Athens in the near future. The Greeks were said to be tiring of M. Venizelos, and they wanted their King. The attitude of the Allies to a return of the Constantine régime was never seriously considered. Had one not heard a good deal about the "Self-determination of small Nations"? At that time the abuse of this particular principle of the celebrated "fourteen points" had not become a matter of general knowledge, and the Royal Family of Greece waited with unsuspecting confidence, believing that when the call came, no difficulties from outside sources would be placed in their way.

Fate—in the shape of a monkey—did indeed bring about the restoration of King Constantine. One day, near the end of 1920, King Alexander was wandering unhappily in the gardens of "Ta-Toi." A couple of monkeys were his companions. A quarrel between the two beasts developed into a vicious fight. The King in an effort to separate them was badly bitten, and died a week later of blood poisoning. His family were not allowed to go to him. Queen Sophie—distracted—left Lucerne believing that the Venizelists would not be so inhuman as to prevent her going to her dying son. She was wrong. Every entry to Greece was barred against her.

The elections, which were to decide whether Greece wished for the return of Constantine or not, took place, and were a triumph for the King. Amid the acclamations of his supporters, King Constantine,

Queen Sophie and the royal family arrived in Athens.

Could a more vivid and pathetic account of that return have been given than that written to one of her nearest relatives by Queen Sophie—Queen, mother and housewife :

“ . . . How am I to write down all the impressions and experiences I have been through—there is so much. It’s all as we said and thought : touching, touching ! The people’s joy. The pleasure and relief to see him again !! They cry, they scream, sing—demonstrate their joy in every way. Of course, the martyrdom for me, you know. Oh ! the empty home, looking for him, waiting for him—hoping for him ! The pain of the silence is far too awful for words. I do not know where I am, and how to bear it. . . . The sailors gave us a great ovation, as I wrote you. The ship most uncomfortable. The bad weather began at once, and lasted all the time till Corinth, from where we were obliged finally to come here with the train. All were dreadfully sick. Baby like a fountain—equally the two poor maids ; it was awful ! I was ill too. . . . Then came a drive in the carriage—screaming—it was terrible : such thousands of people as one never saw before on the street balconies, etc. . . . A tremendous *Durcheinander*. The church crammed—short *Te Deum*—that church, where a few weeks ago. . . . Oh ! so sad . . . the grave is pathetic, lonely . . . thousands of people want to see me. Heaps to do and get rooms

tidy. How one's life feels—changed and finished—in comparison to formerly! Nothing can be the same ever—all so different. . . .

“My heart feels ready to burst : break.”

Even in the delirium of joy around her Queen Sophie was sceptical. She suspected that the rosy apple might be rotten at the core. For what could Greece do in the long run without the support of the Entente?—and so far there had been no gesture of encouragement from that quarter. Greece was still waging war against Turkey. The return of the King put fresh courage into the hard-wrought troops and a series of successes resulted. Greek hopes rose high. Did they not always believe that Constantinople would fall to Constantine?

They were prepared to suffer for success. But there were those, like Queen Sophie, who asked themselves, “What will happen when the present limited resources of Greece come to an end?” “Whom and what have we got to fall back upon?”

The poison instilled into the minds of France and England by the reports of the Venizelists and the unreliable information supplied by misguided, if well-intentioned, agents, had not yet been eradicated from the system of Europe. To have recognised Constantine again as King would have been an admission that their former treatment of him had been a mistake. And to breathe such an admission at a time when the lungs of the Entente were fully occupied blowing a fanfare of their own righteousness, might have been—embarrassing.

So, diplomatic relations, while not severed with the Greek Government, were not resumed with the King. Such was the position, when in March 1922, I went to Greece to pay my promised visit.

From Berlin to Rome the journey is quick, the sleeping cars comfortable, the food good and the scenery enchanting. When in addition one is provided with diplomatic travelling facilities one would be really hard put to it to find any ground for complaint. I had made the same journey the year before, when at the British Embassy in Rome were Sir George and Lady Georgiana Buchanan and their daughter Meriel—who has told so well the truth about the dark days in Russia. Sir George was one of our handsomest diplomatists. After the period of inactivity which followed his return from Russia he was given the coveted position of Ambassador to the Court of Italy, but I think he was never quite able to rid himself of the suspicion that his appointment, in spite of the fact that no one was more qualified for the post, was part of the price of his silence. The fact that the British Government either ignored, or would not avail itself, of the arrangements that he had made for the removal of the Russian Imperial Family to safety, was a grief from which he never quite freed himself. Added to this was the knowledge that he himself had been generally misjudged in the matter.

Count de Salis was our Minister to the Vatican. Dining with him one night at his official residence in the Borghese Palace I met Sir Stuart Coats, an ardent Roman Catholic convert who, in his capacity as

Chamberlain to the Pope, arranged an audience for me with his Holiness. That audience and a luncheon at the Grand Hotel with twelve Prelates, including the late Cardinal Gasquet and the Secretary of State—Monsignor Ceretti—were two of the outstanding events of a seven days' sojourn in Rome. The recollection of that luncheon never fails to bring a blush to my cheek. I knew nothing of the habit Prelates have of lunching at noon and when I arrived at a quarter before one (having carelessly assumed one o'clock to be the festive hour) I was informed that by twelve-twenty their Reverences had become impatient and had commenced their luncheon at twelve-thirty. My candid admission of guilt secured for me immediately an aggregate of forgiveness, on which for a long time afterwards I drew as a reserve to white-wash myself of other peccadilloes. I sat by Cardinal Gasquet, and Cardinals should be cultivated, if, like Cardinal Gasquet, they are Irish and have a grand sense of humour.

The journey from Rome to Brindisi, where I was to embark for Athens, was made amusing by the prattle of an engaged couple who, with the girl's mother and sister, used the fiancé's sleeping compartment (next to mine) in the daytime as a sitting room. They spoke English—which, however, was mother tongue to none of them.

It was hot and all the doors were open. I did not have to eavesdrop to hear the following :

*He.* " I eat very little for breakfast."

*She.* " Oh ! I eat a lot. Do you walk about in Copenhagen."

*He.* "Oh, yes, a lot. If they recognise me they sometimes say, 'That's the Crown Prince,' but that's all. We're very simple."

*The Sister.* "Do you wear uniform every day?"

*He.* "Only on duty. It's such a relief to go about like this."

*Sister.* "You'll have to wear uniform when you arrive at Athens."

*He.* "Oh, no, I've a nice new suit for that."

*She.* "No, no, NO! You *must* wear uniform. Uncle Tino will be there and Aunt Sophie. There'll be a regular 'to do' and remember you'll have to bow and kiss Aunt Sophie."

*He.* "Oh, no! not kiss her!"

*She.* "Well—her hand, then. Won't he, Mother?"

*Mother.* "When he sees your Aunt Sophie he'll want to kiss her—but her hand will do at first."

*She.* "There!—you see! I *was* right; you'll *have* to kiss her hand."

*Sister.* "Do you like animals? Have you got any?"

*He.* "I had a 'cawt' when I was little."

*She.* "A what?"

*Sister* (laughing). "Oh, dear! he means a cat. C, A, T, cat. Your English is awful!"

*She.* "What did you do with your 'cawt'? Have you got it still?"

*Sister* (laughing). "Darling, if he says 'cawt' for 'cat,' what on earth will he say for 'kittens'?"

*He.* "I had only half the 'ca——'."



*She.* "Careful, now!"

*He.* "'Ket'."

*Sister.* "Bravo! Go up top."

*He.* "The other half belonged to my little brother, but I had the front half, and I discovered that all the expense was incurred by the front half. I had to pay for milk and chopped meat, so I sold my half of the 'ket' to my brother."

*She.* "What did he do with it?"

*He.* "Starved it to death!"

*Sister* (shuddering). "Oh, what a horrible family to marry into. Think it over, Olga, darling."

The young man was the Crown Prince of Denmark. His fiancée, to whom he had just become engaged, was Princess Olga, daughter of Prince Nicolas of Greece, a very pretty girl with as pretty a sister, and with an extremely handsome Russian mother, a daughter of the Archduke Vladimir.

On the ship the Crown Prince wore his "nice new suit," but his pleading, "Wouldn't it be all right with a bowler hat?" fell on deaf ears. The ladies were adamant.

So it came to pass that it was a faultlessly uniformed naval lieutenant, in cocked hat and much gold braid, who walked down the gangway and raised in homage the hand of Queen Sophie delicately to his lips.

(Whether it was the fate of the "cawt" or what, I do not know, but Princess Olga took her sister's advice. She "thought it over" and married somebody else.)

As diplomatic relations with King Constantine had

not been resumed I had decided that it might be wise to stay in an hotel in Athens rather than go to the Palace and take the possible risk of incurring the displeasure of the Government in whose employment I was still privileged to be. One of the Secretaries of the Italian Embassy, an old acquaintance, met me at the Piraeus and motored me to Athens where I was able to get accommodation only in a second-class hotel. When the excitement caused by the reception of the Danish Crown Prince had died down, I went to the Palace and wrote my name. Shortly afterwards I was summoned to the telephone in the hotel. The Queen spoke to me and commanded me to the Palace. I went. I arrived in time for a family tea-party. The King was in uniform, looking very ill. Princess Helen of Rumania was there, back in Greece for the first time since her marriage to Prince Carol. Prince and Princess Nicolas with their daughters and prospective son-in-law were, with the exception of myself, the only guests.

Princess Irene and Prince Paul—Princess Katherine was in her pram—completed the party which was presided over by Queen Sophie.

I had a few minutes' audience with Her Majesty before tea. She had taken me to the suite of rooms that had been prepared for me. They were high up in the Palace. I looked out of my window on to a lovely cypress avenue that led to a small Greek temple in the gardens. I did not want to go back to that second-rate hotel—but I did. One awful night I spent there. I had been about half-an-hour asleep when *they* woke me. I jumped out of bed, turned

the light up, and the bedclothes down. If *they* had been unanimous they would have probably pushed me out of bed. I spent the remainder of that night in a chair. My unsightly appearance at luncheon at the Palace the following day called for explanations which were, with appropriate gesture, so graphic that they resulted in the King giving instructions that my belongings were immediately to be sent for and brought to the Palace. "It is the first time," said His Majesty, "that 'bugs' have been the reason my hospitality has been accepted."

I drove to the summer residence, "Ta-Toi," with the Queen next day. They had only been one year in Athens since the return from exile, but already the feeling of insecurity, which ended later with the banishment of King Constantine for the second time, was apparent.

"Some day," King Constantine said, "England will know the truth. I wonder what she will do when she does learn it?"

King Constantine was not destined to live to the day when England knew. Queen Sophie saw the dawn of that day, and died happier because of it. She came to England for the last time in 1931. Her children were with her and had been invited to a ball at Buckingham Palace. "At least we are no longer treated as outcasts," she said. "The children are accepted as 'decent.' I am so happy about it. If only my husband could know."

## CHAPTER XXIV

## JEWS AND GENTILES

MY way back to Berlin from Lucerne led me through Frankfort in May 1920, and I took the opportunity of visiting our sub-section there. Frankfort, Hamburg, Munich, Dresden and Cologne were the favoured cities to which all the officers not employed at Headquarters in Berlin were anxious to be sent.

Königsberg, Stuttgart, Stettin, Breslau were not sought after. Frankfort had been—as one knows—a very wealthy city, but in 1920 its condition was little different from that of the others. One had the feeling in them all that a kind of dry rot had set in.

Frankfort was the great Jewish town of Europe, but now the dominant race was little in evidence. When they did appear, it was in a shy, furtive way. Yet Frankfort was a haven of refuge to them compared with Berlin or Hamburg. The name of Rothschild gave the Jew a position in Frankfort that he did not enjoy in other parts of the country. Also the Frankforters appeared to realise the fact that the prosperity of their town was due to and dependent on Jewish enterprise. That Frankfort, in spite of the disadvantages of French occupation, was one of the

first places to recover after the general upheaval is, without doubt, largely attributable to the work and influence of its Jewish population. They worked quietly, unostentatiously, looking ahead, always with the view that what is going to happen a week hence is as important as what is going on at the moment. I saw a good deal of Jews in Germany during the next few years, and found them to be the kindest-hearted and most generous of people.

I motored from Frankfort to Friedrichshof and, despite my uniform, was held up twice by French pickets, from whom I had to suffer the indignity of being searched. The Castle was closed. I found the Royal Family housed in a little cottage in the grounds. "Peace and poverty," said the Princess. How grateful they were for the "Peace," and how uncomplaining of the "poverty"! Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse, whom I had met before at Darmstadt, was still an invalid. At the time that her two eldest boys were killed their mother was nursing their father, who had been dangerously wounded in the stomach. He was a quiet, studious, cultured man, more of the type of a professor than of a soldier. He had been destined by the Kaiser to be King of Finland, had the War taken a different turn, and the Finns had sent a deputation offering him a welcome. But all that was over now, and I doubt if anyone regretted the lost chance of a throne less than did the Prince to whom it had been offered.

We talked late into the night. Germany would, he believed, be happier under a constitutional monarchy on the lines of that of Great Britain. The

question of who should be the Monarch was of minor importance ; nothing must be forced on the people. Any Government that was likely to improve present conditions was to be encouraged. The present Government was doing it. Later, if the nation wanted to change to a Monarchy it would do so only when the majority voted for it. He had a horror of anything in the nature of a *Putsch*, either from Right or Left. He talked much of his friend, Prince Max of Baden, and deplored the fact that the Kaiser and his party were not sensible enough to understand Prince Max's action with regard to the Emperor's abdication.

I rode with the Princess next morning. The stables now housed but a humble pair of animals, used, either to be ridden, or to trundle the one carriage to and from the station. She told me a great deal about her mother, the Empress Frederick. I asked her if there were any truth in the rumour that the Empress had married Count Seckendorff. "It is a monstrous falsehood which has caused us great annoyance," she said. "I was with my mother constantly until she died, and I know. Do give the lie to such a story when you can."

She told me that her mother had asked Sir Frederick Ponsonby to take her letters to England in order that they might not fall into the hands of her son, the Emperor William the Second. She told me too that she had all Queen Victoria's replies to her mother's letters, and added that she would not permit them to be published. "In the interests of everyone, it is better not to publish them yet awhile."

It was as the result of a perfunctory remark that I once made to the effect that no matter how strained international relations might be, common ground for sympathetic interchange could always be found in the subjects of art, music or science, that an experience I treasure came my way.

My interest was directed to an altar-piece by Pesellino which hung—incomplete—in the National Gallery. It was a rare possession. There were few examples of the work of this fifteenth-century Florentine master in England, or indeed anywhere, for the painter had died at the age of thirty-four, and during his short career he had produced few masterpieces. But—one of the panels was missing. Probably looted in the Napoleonic campaign, the altar-piece had been sawn into sections—for convenience of sale or transport. Of the missing panel no one knew anything. It was thought that it might be in Germany and it was suggested to me that I might interest myself in looking for it. Now I knew that no one had a more comprehensive knowledge of Germany's art treasures than the late Empress Frederick and I decided to enlist the help of her daughter, Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse. She wrote to Professor Bode, the Curator of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. He probably knew more about art in general than anyone else then alive.

Her Royal Highness asked Professor Bode to do her the favour of receiving me and of giving me any information he might possess which might lead to the discovery of the missing Pesellino. She added that as the major portion of the work was in England

she hoped that, should the missing panel be found in Germany, he would help in arranging a sale or an exchange for something of equal, or greater value.

Professor Bode received me—standing behind his desk in the Museum—without smile or gesture of welcome. In his long emaciated fingers he held the Princess's letter. He was over eighty. His thin body seemed to have shrunk—except in height—for the elegant, if aged, frock coat was now all too large for the wasted frame. The aquiline features were made pathetically pronounced by an almost skeleton condition. From his cold, bright blue eyes came the only sign of life.

"It is kind of your Excellency to receive me," I said. "I see you have her Royal Highness's letter, so perhaps I need not explain. . . ."

I stopped for lack of encouragement. He might have been a graven image. Then, in a thin voice that had an edge to it, he said slowly, almost with difficulty, "Will you explain to me why I should do you or your country a favour?"

I was silent. What could I say to this patriarchal *savant* that would further my cause without hurting his feelings?

"Forgive me," I said at last, "but is it not possible that you have misread her Royal Highness's letter? I think if you read it again you will find that she asks you to do *her* a favour for her mother's sake. She does not suggest that you should do *me* a favour." Five—ten—perhaps fifteen seconds we stood looking at one another across the table. I think his knees



gave first, then his shoulders slumped, and the high-held head from which he had stared imperiously at me sank slowly forward. He put two trembling hands on the table and lowered himself into his chair.

"You—won—that," he said with a smile into which, however, there had crept a touch of warmth. "Sit down—and tell me—what you want."

When I had finished I had the impression that he had heard little. He held out his hand. "Come back and see me on Sunday morning," was his only comment. The interview was ended. I was dismissed—and of the missing panel I had learned nothing.

He was waiting for me next Sunday morning, and together we drove to the ex-Kaiser's Schloss at the end of Unter den Linden. It was then in the process of being converted into a Museum. We walked through the public rooms and a caretaker unlocked a door communicating with the ex-ruler's private apartments. Into a small, dark, badly-aired bedroom I followed my silent guide. He opened a shutter of the single window and a shaft of sunlight fell on the opposite wall, illuminating with a stream of gold the only piece of decoration in the room—a painted panel about four feet long.

"There !" he said. That was all. But the altarpiece in the National Gallery is now complete.

In the autumn of 1920 the British force in Berlin was increased by sixty officers, N.C.O.'s and men, appointed by the Imperial Graves Commission to locate and care for the graves of British soldiers and subjects

who had died in Germany during the War. Now the Germans have always imagined that there is something mad about the English. "Der verrückte Engländer" has long been one of their pet expressions, and when the sixty-odd "he-men" who represented the Graves Commission arrived in Berlin, under the command of an attractive and elegant lady "Colonel"—for such was her rank—it was scarcely to be wondered if they concluded that the mental condition of "Der Engländer" was even more serious than they had imagined.

The lady who headed this band of Britishers in Berlin was Adelaide Livingstone, Dame and Colonel !

The name had a familiar ring about it. She had been heard of frequently during the war, when her work for and among British prisoners in Germany had won for her respect, reputation and a title.

Shortly after the arrival of this Commission I decided that it was time I paid an official courtesy call on the "Colonel," and one afternoon I wended my way to her headquarters—spacious offices in Unter den Linden.

A couple of orderlies handed me over to an A.D.C.—everything done in thoroughly military style—and he ushered me, after a very short wait, during which I pictured to myself a horny-handed, flat-footed, deep-voiced, thick-ankled Amazon, into a comfortable-workmanlike office, and into the presence of a slight, delicate-looking, and very feminine young woman. It did not take long to understand the appointment. A dynamic personality and a capacity for work and endurance—in spite of a rather frail physique—that

was a constant source of wonder and awe to those who worked with her and to all who knew her. Two years she was with us, and when she and her men departed, it was to leave a work that had been completed in a minimum of time and with no fuss or bother. She worked in as complete accord with the German officials as she did with her own people, in spite of the fact that her reputation with the former was nearly wrecked at the outset. Here is the story :

After her arrival in Berlin one of her first official duties was to present her credentials to the German Cabinet. The hour was appointed, and a little paler than usual (with excitement) Dame Adelaide was led by a deferential footman to a waiting room adjoining that in which she was to be received. She looked about for a mirror. Being very much a woman, she was anxious to make as favourable an impression as possible on a critical male audience. There was no mirror, so nervously, but vigorously, she powdered her nose without the aid of a glass. A last reassuring pat of the puff, the doors opened, a dozen good men and true rose in friendly greeting, and looked at her with expressions that rapidly registered the degrees between "set fair" and "frost."

"I could feel that I had suddenly disappointed or antagonised them," Dame Adelaide said. "They had been prepared to be friendly and interested, but even before I spoke I felt that a change for the worse had set in. I couldn't understand it. After the first look they would only glance furtively at me. The bare formalities over, I departed feeling that I had been a complete failure. Even the footman—who

had shown no disquietude on my entry—now seemed to view me with disapproval. About my chauffeur's feelings there was no doubt whatsoever. He gave a gasp—and lowered his eyes. I reached my apartment; my maid stared at me for a moment in blank astonishment, coughed and turned her gaze to the ceiling. I hurried to the hall mirror to remove my hat—and my blood turned to water. *In the middle of a dead white face—I had rouged my nose !”*

## CHAPTER XXV

## THE KAISER

THE reaction of the German people after the War to their former heroes was most interesting. The Kaiser did not come off well. "Our Royal Deserter" was one of the less unkind appellations. His failure might have been forgiven, but that, in the bitterest hour, he should have fled and left the people who had given not only their fathers, brothers and sons, but even their wives, sisters and little children for him—for were these not dying of starvation?—this was the unforgivable sin.

One mystery remains unsolved. It has been widely reported and is currently believed that it was Hindenburg who advised the Kaiser to go to Holland. Hindenburg has never admitted this and has refused to make any statement regarding it. A near relative of the President told me that the only reply he has been known to have made to an enquiry as to whether or not he counselled the Emperor to flee was, "Have you not read that his Majesty has said so?"

The Kaiser had never actually held the affection of the people. He had been a spectacular success. They had loved his panoply of state. The sound of his motor hooter, playing the first few notes of a bugle call, as he raced along the Linden ; or his impressive

appearance on a horse with imposing entourage, never failed to evoke enthusiasm, which, however, was based more on passing emotion than on sound sense and confidence. The ex-Emperor had the art of appearing to be a finer fellow than he was, and to this his subjects responded with a show of admiration which time and subsequent history proved to be superficial.

“Jack of all trades ; master of none,” they say of him now. Certainly he had more talents than the average man of education and culture, and—this I do know—he had the faculty of inspiring a deep devotion in many of his friends. He let himself drift too easily and pleasantly on the soft waters of music, the delights of architecture and art, but he was a bit at sea on them all. There is a story—not unkind, but typical—of his examination of the plans for the church erected in memory of his father. The architect had placed an asterisk above the top of the steeple, drawing attention to a marginal remark. The Emperor, in his impulsive way, said, “Oh, I like your idea of putting a star above the steeple ; capital.” The architect had not the courage to tell him the real significance of the mark, so up went the star, and there it remained until, by order of the republican government, it was removed as being ridiculous.

Had the Emperor concentrated his mental energies on the study of character, how different things might have been. Even those who cared for and knew him best admit that he was the unwitting tool of others who turned his weakest points to their advantage. They kept unpleasant things from him ; they flattered

him ; they made his mind up for him ; they put the question and all unperceived slipped the answer in with it. They gave him a flag to wave, a drum to rattle, and a box of matches to play with. These, they told him, would frighten the foe. He believed them, and only when it was too late did he perceive that his playthings had set the world aflame. He never wanted war. He had little to gain by it and all to lose. But the military party was impatient. Socialism was mounting rampantly in Germany. Unless the Army and the Navy were to justify their existence by giving the Fatherland something tangible in return for all they were costing, there would be, without doubt, some drastic and unpleasant change in the near future. Now was the time. England unprepared, France and Russia would be easy to deal with. The Kaiser, yachting in Scandinavian waters, need not be told the true significance of affairs.

His cousin, Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, gave me a dramatic account of the Emperor's awakening to the real state of affairs.

Uneasy, these last weeks in July 1914, with the growing suspicion being forced upon him that there was more afoot than he was allowed to be aware of, he decided to curtail his cruise in the Norwegian Fjords and return to Berlin. A telegram to the Chancellor announced his decision. On receipt of the answer he called his staff and friends together on the yacht and read them the Chancellor's message, which advised him on no account to return at that moment as it might awaken serious suspicion in England.

"Gentlemen," said the Kaiser bitterly, "the first advice my Ministers honour me with after my three weeks' absence is that, in this time of trouble, I should absent myself. I am reminded at this moment of an episode in the history of the Tsar Alexander II, who, when relations between Russia and Turkey were strained, was assured by his Ministers that there was no question of Russia mobilising against Turkey. Some few days later the Tsar, while travelling, noticed several troop trains, and demanded what the movement signified. He was then told that in order to spare him annoyance and anxiety, mobilisation had been proceeded with without his consent or knowledge. And so," said the Kaiser, bitingly, "I shall return to Berlin at once, in case *my* Ministers have decided to treat me with the same consideration as was meted out to the Tsar."

He returned. It was too late then for him to do anything. The war stream had swollen into flood. He had either to be swept aside into oblivion or be carried on into—what? Once before his abdication had been asked for. That horrible memory was still with him. He had decided after the Agadir trouble to abdicate, and let his son succeed him. The Crown Prince told me how he sent for him and announced his decision to him. "My father was in bed, and so upset that I could not agree," he said. "He then changed his mind quickly and determined to go on reigning. I wish now I had accepted on the spot. I should never have allowed myself to be humbugged as they humbugged my father, and this war would never have happened."



There is much to be said for the Kaiser. During his reign Germany had been successful to a degree hitherto never reached by any country in so short a space of time. He possessed many of the qualities of a successful monarch, but he was deficient in those in which he should have been supreme. He lacked two indispensable characteristics—judgment and the courage of his convictions.

Lord Rosebery remarked in a letter to me : “ It is rather absurd that the Emperor should now say that he never had any power at all. One can believe that ; but then he should not have bragged all over the world that he was the greatest war lord, and the highest.”

“ I am inclined to think,” said Lord Rosebery on another occasion, “ that he had not much to do with the declarations of war ; but if that is so he ought not always to have pranced about declaring that he was the lord of war. His monomania that he is soon going to return is common, I fancy, to all exiled monarchs.”

And a parting reflection of Lord Rosebery’s was : “ It certainly was a melancholy exit for one who had proclaimed himself so loudly as almost the Almighty to come from that high position to being dunned for rates at Doorn.”

He was always effective before an audience or with some kind of background, but left alone he usually appeared at a disadvantage.

When King Edward, who deplored the unfriendly feeling between Germany and England, last visited Berlin, he decided to try and see the Emperor

alone and have a heart-to-heart talk with him. It was the last chance of coming to an understanding. King Edward told the Crown Prince to arrange that when the Kaiser came to his sitting room after dinner he was to come, contrary to the Imperial custom, alone. "I begged my father to go alone," the Crown Prince told me, "but he insisted that my brother, August Wilhelm, and I should go too. I told him that it was the King's wish, but that made him more obstinate, because he always had the feeling that King Edward could get the better of him alone. With us there I knew my father would never be natural and would only put the King's back up, so when we reached the door I pulled my brother back and we retreated down the corridor. But it was no use, my father followed us and commanded us to go with him. We could not stand fighting in the passage, so, as he would not go alone, we had to obey. King Edward, who was sitting at his writing desk, looked at the three of us and just shrugged his shoulders in contemptuous resignation. He told us to sit down and talked of a few banal matters. It was the last chance—and my father lost it."

It is easy to be wise after the event and it became a popular diversion to criticise the "Kaiser's Flight to Holland." Thousands of his former adherents were voluble in their protestations of what they, in a similar position, would have done. The most dashing of these heroes would have led a forlorn hope and fallen in the forefront of the last battle. Others, more modest, would have delivered themselves up to the enemy as a kind of sacrificial lamb. Suicide was also

advocated. A return to Berlin at the head of the "undefeated army" would, according to many, have saved both the country and the dynasty.

So general, widespread and harmful to the monarchical cause were the accusations of cowardice that a pamphlet entitled "Why the Kaiser left Germany," setting forth the Emperor's reasons for taking the step he did, was privately issued from Doorn. In summary it said :

1. It had been the Kaiser's wish to march back at the head of his troops to Germany. But Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Groener (who had succeeded Ludendorff as Quarter-Master-General) told him the troops would not march back with him, while if he remained in Germany the Entente would probably not conclude the Armistice.

2. Suicide was not compatible with his religious belief, and would certainly have been criticised as still further evidence of cowardice.

3. Had he returned as a private individual he would have been at the mercy of the "Reds." Surrender for trial by the enemy would then have been a simple matter. Holland could protect him. The Germany of that time could not, and the greatest of all humiliations—the surrender of their Kaiser—would not be spared the people.

4. To have sought a "glorious end on the front," to have led "a forlorn hope," was a technical impossibility. The Armistice was to be signed the next day and the Kaiser could not have reached the front in time.

"No one," concluded this document, "should

criticise the steps taken without being in possession of the facts. It should not be forgotten that Hindenburg—then the responsible adviser of the Kaiser—besought him on November 9th, 1918, to go to Holland—Hindenburg, the man in whom everyone believed, and of whom everyone then said ‘What Hindenburg does cannot but be right.’ One should also remember that behind Hindenburg stood hundreds of officers who had been called to General Headquarters on account of their mental ability, and not one single one of these expressed any other opinion than that voiced by Hindenburg, which was ‘There is only one thing possible : the Kaiser must go to Holland.’ ”

This was not without a beneficial effect among those of the Kaiser’s friends whom it reached. But the real reaction in favour of the Kaiser was born with the Allies’ demand for his extradition. Nothing else could have furnished such successful Hohenzollern propaganda. Looking back on the phantasmagoria of strange happenings and changing waves of emotional opinion in those days, one cannot but be convinced that had it not been for the revival of sympathy for the Kaiser, engendered by the threat of his trial by the Allies, the Kapp conspirators would never have had the courage to embark on the attempt to restore the Hohenzollern Monarchy.

“It will scarcely even now be disputed,” General von Plessen (“the Power behind The Throne”) said to me, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, when, with Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, I had gone to “take wine” with him at Potsdam, “that

without the hindrance caused by the British Expeditionary Force, the German armies would have swept on to Paris." "And," I added mentally, "occupied the northern French Ports ; had London within range of her guns and——" But my host's conversation was too interesting for me to allow myself to slip into a sidestream of further speculation.

"I believe when prejudice dies, and the world can study dispassionately the true course of events since 1914 ; when it has determined the basis on which the military success of the Allies was built, and the rock on which Germany's hopes foundered, the finger that points the verdict will trace these letters, H-A-L-D-A-N-E."

This tribute was the more remarkable since it came from the Adjutant-General of the ex-Kaiser. No one in the immediate entourage of the ex-Kaiser had played a more important rôle behind the scenes than this veteran courtier *sans pareil*. He had been bequeathed to the Emperor by the Empress Frederick, and he had remained uninterruptedly at his elbow, to hint, advise, encourage or restrain, until his royal master settled in Holland. His influence on the Kaiser was greater than that of any other of the "Camarilla"—and more permanent. "Some might come and some might go"—Plessen remained. He stood between the Kaiser and a multitude of trouble. But, if he were a bulwark against much that might have harassed his master he was also the means of depriving him of much valuable experience. He blocked the path that might have led the Kaiser to cultivate the habit of judging men and character for himself.

General von Plessen had invariably accompanied the Emperor on his visits to England and had been well liked there. My call on him on his birthday came about in this way.

It was an accepted understanding after the War that Germans who had been the recipients of British honours, and vice versa, should renounce these honours and return the insignia. Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein had not yet been able to induce himself to part with the treasured Orders bestowed on him by his grandmother, Queen Victoria, and his uncle, King Edward. He hoped that his English birth had placed him in a different category from native Germans, but decided to take the advice of General von Plessen, an acknowledged authority on such matters of etiquette, and asked me to accompany him. The old General, leaning heavily on two sticks, met his royal guest at a gate opening on to a garden path. He led us into the *Herrenzimmer* where that snack called an "Imbis" was invitingly prepared. Sitting down he said to me :

"I want you to feel that you are on no enemy territory, and I wish to show how I appreciate your visit. Look—I have done my best!" and he indicated the table on which stood two bottles of Hock, and cheese and herring sandwiches. "It is the decorations I want you to note," he added. "They are some of my most valued possessions."

Between the bottles of wine, and encircled by a wreath of tiny flowers, stood an autographed photograph of Queen Victoria; and flanked by the sandwiches lay a massive silver cigar box, equally

garlanded and engraved with the Royal Arms of England and the monogram of King Edward.

"Your Excellency has not only honoured me, but it seems to me you have answered the question his Highness came to put to you."

Prince Albert explained his problem. "Ah, no!" the General answered. "This does not apply in your Highness's case. These," he indicated the royal presents, "are private gifts which I could not return if I would, and which I would not return if I could. The return of an Order is a different matter. I think, as things are, it might make your Highness's position easier in Germany if you return the Orders. King George will probably give them back to you some day."

A few weeks later I brought Prince Albert's Orders—the Grand Crosses of the Bath and the Victorian Order—back to England and handed them to Lord Stamfordham in Buckingham Palace. He took them and said sadly, "What a pity that this should have to be. Poor Prince Albert! but I think he is right."

In due course Prince Albert became Duke of Schleswig-Holstein and for ten years lived happily in the family seat at Primkenau in Upper Silesia.

He remained always a little more English than German. He went back to England and renewed acquaintance with many of his old friends. He played golf at Sunningdale again, and his name was restored to the lists of Captains. He was happy.

I laid a wreath on his coffin in the village church where he lay in state last year in Primkenau. The

Union Jack draped the bier, and on a velvet cushion his Orders were spread.

But I noticed that the G.C.B. and the G.C.V.O. were not among them.

I never saw General von Plessen after that visit to Potsdam. I remember him as a gracious, tactful, picturesque old gentleman. He skated delicately over such thin ice as the War and the Peace Treaty, and revelled in entertaining reminiscences of England and the English. Although the difference between his circumstances before and after the War was great, he never by word or sign indicated that he felt in the least the transition from the position of leader of the orchestra to that of a humble spectator in the gallery. He died in 1923.

In his blunt, direct, lucid way, Lord Haldane, then another great "spectator," told me of his own knowledge of the circumstances which had led to the Great War. He gave me a more vivid picture of the Kaiser—he knew him intimately—than any I have ever had from that monarch's own friends.

He said that he was convinced during his last conversation with the Kaiser in 1912 that the German policy must inevitably lead to war. General von Plessen, in the only reference he made to the Kaiser, told me that after that conversation the Emperor had said, "I feel certain that Haldane has made up his mind that we are preparing for war. I could feel the actual moment when he became convinced of it. Too stupid!"

Lord Haldane was persuaded that the Kaiser never



wanted war, but (as he said in his book *Before the War*) that he believed that by adopting an exaggerated war-like attitude and by "emphasising the military power of Germany," he would prevent the many envious war-like nations from making war on him. Thus was peace to be kept. "The German was to be so strong by land and sea that he could swagger down the High Street of the world making his will prevail at every turn."

"But, mind you, William was no fool," Lord Haldane said. "The man had a grand brain, but he had allowed it to become badly tangled. Instead of unravelling it himself with disciplined thought and cool judgment, he had let so many others have a tug at it—all in different directions. Clever, ill-advised and impulsive. If he had been fed on the porridge of truth instead of the soufflé of flattery he would have been a great man and a successful ruler."

Such in brief was Lord Haldane's estimate.

## CHAPTER XXVI

## SOUTH GERMANY

IN 1920 one had to be careful about the company one kept. Either one had to cut oneself off entirely from private association with the people who mattered, or run the risk of being classed as an intriguer or a spy. If seen with any relative of the Kaiser, one was suspected of plotting to restore the monarchy, while a dinner with an extreme socialist meant nothing more nor less than that one was in the pay of the Soviet! Rather than be cut off from many interesting people, I decided to take the risk, with a due observance of discretion. "How," I used to wonder, "can one ever come to a working understanding with these people, unless one gets to know them?"

For over a year South Germany had refused to comply with orders from the Central Government in Prussia to carry out certain of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty. Bavaria, between whom and Prussia relations had never been cordial, showed no desire to ease matters for her unpopular neighbour with the Allies, who were now threatening Germany with dire penalties in the event of further non-compliance or evasion. One particular question had given considerable trouble. The Bavarians refused

to allow surprise visits to be carried out by the officers of the Inter-Allied Commission. They insisted on knowing in advance what particular place was to be visited in search of arms. The result was, naturally, that by the time the search party arrived nothing was to be found. For months a correspondence, growing more and more acrimonious, had been going on between Paris and Berlin. But Prussia couldn't *force* Bavaria, and Bavaria went her way, oblivious or contemptuous of the fact that she was thereby laying up a store of trouble, not only for Prussia, but for all Germany, including herself.

When matters on this particular question had nearly reached a climax, General Bingham sent for me and said :

"I don't believe Prussia will ever get this straightened out with Bavaria. There's too much ill feeling. Paris doesn't understand the real difficulties Prussia is faced with. You go to Bavaria. See whom you like, talk to them, and get permission for these surprise visits to be carried out."

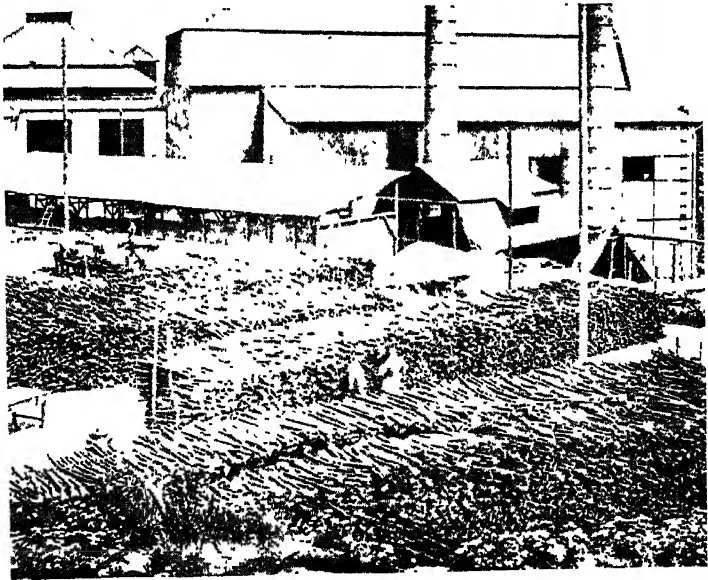
It was an order after my own heart.

I went to Munich and, within twenty-four hours, was able to send to Berlin a document officially signed and sealed by the Bavarian Minister of the Interior, sanctioning the visits.

I commenced my campaign with the German liaison officer, through whom, etiquette demanded, contact with other German officials had to be made. After a time he told me he understood and agreed with me—but it was his chief who really had the power to do anything.



MUNICH, 1922 : "WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER OUR ARMS"



THE ARMS SURRENDERED



“ Good,” I said, “ take me to him and we’ll tell him you see how things are and how they must develop.”

So to the chief we went. But the chief—although he also agreed—was acting under the direct orders of the Chief of Police.

“ Good ! ” I said again, “ We’ll all go to the Chief of Police.”

The Chief of Police listened to my arguments, which were backed up by the two liaison officers. He, too, saw where Bavaria’s attitude was likely to lead, but the Minister of the Interior was the man I ought to see. So, adding the Chief of Police to my “ bag,” I packed them all into the waiting car and drove them to the Bavarian House of Parliament, where we were received by the Minister. I explained the object of my visit and how I had, more or less, “ shanghaied ” my companions into accompanying me in order that he might be absolutely assured of their approval, and then I asked him to give me a written authorisation for the visits.

After half-an-hour’s conversation the Minister gave me the desired document.

“ And now,” said the Chief of Police, with a twinkle in his eye, holding up his hand like a schoolboy, “ please may we go ? ”

Württemberg had been behaving in much the same manner, and to Stuttgart I went from Munich. But, armed with the Bavarian capitulation, the task was simpler. I was able to dispense with the necessity for commandeering witnesses. Württemberg, like its neighbour, took the sensible view, and from that day we had little trouble on the vexed question of surprise visits.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## INFLATION AS I SAW IT

THE year 1920 came to an end. In Germany Government had succeeded Government. Ebert-Bauer ; Ebert-Müller ; Ebert-Fehrenbach. And in spite of such difficulties as the hopeless financial position, disarmament, unemployment, the extradition of the War Criminals ; in spite of the staggering blow of the Kapp *Putsch*, Germany, like a cat with nine lives, still limped along.

It was a bad year ended, but there was no rejoicing when the New Year was rung in. There was the nightmare of the future to contemplate.

"It isn't hope that keeps us alive—it's guts," Noske said one day when I met him by chance in the Tiergarten.

The all-important question of Reparations was about to be discussed in Paris, and Germany waited more in fear than in hope for the terms shortly to be dictated. Would these be possible—or impossible? Would Germany, as in the case of the Peace Treaty, have to accept them in either event? The uncertainty was having a bad effect on the exchange. The seeds of inflation had taken root.

The story of inflation has been told often, but not, I think, as I saw and lived through it.

Spandau is an unattractive suburb of Berlin which has grown up around a citadel, which, with its moats and towers, its twelve-foot thick walls and guarded entrance, seemed to provide an appropriate and safe receptacle for Germany's gold reserve. I first saw the famous citadel from the Berlin Golf Course. Herbert von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, a nephew of the veteran President, and married to Marie Hay, of the Kinnoull family, pointed it out to me.

Von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg told me how part of the gold received from the French as indemnity after the Franco-Prussian war had been brought to Spandau to form a reserve for the initial expenses of such future war as Germany might be involved in.

"So that this," I said, producing a hundred mark note, "represents some of the gold in that tower?"

"Represented," he replied, smiling sadly. "As for so many other things, we use the past tense here, too."

"You mean—the gold isn't there—it is spent?" I asked incredulously. "But all your people who have War Loan, Government Bonds, all those who have these notes—what becomes of them?"

"You'll see—in time"—and he walked away to look for a ball he had cut into the scrub.

During the War Germany withdrew the actual gold coinage from circulation and substituted an addition to her paper currency. As Germany's chances of winning the War became more and more debatable, confidence that these notes would be redeemable at



their face value gradually diminished and the paper mark dropped until, when the War ended, it took over thirty marks instead of twenty to buy one pound sterling. Thus commenced what was probably the greatest financial disaster of all time.

The continuous fall in the value of the mark created consternation throughout the country. Prices of all commodities rose by leaps and bounds, and the adjustment of the wage-scale was by no means in ratio to the purchasing value of the mark. This naturally increased the internal difficulties with which the Government were daily faced.

"It will be better when the Peace Terms are signed," said the optimists. "It can't possibly be worse," said the less hopeful. Both were wrong. When the mark reached two hundred and fifty to the pound, it was the general belief that it could not go lower, or at any rate much lower, and speculation for a rise in the currency became rife. But, when the mark, after rolling, rushing, hurtling down hill, came finally, after one last grand crash, to rest at the bottom of the abyss, the equivalent value of the English shilling was, in Germany, *one thousand million marks*.

People with mathematical minds worked out, at one stage, that one-mark notes to the value of one shilling sterling placed end to end would paper a path from Berlin to Rome. It would have cost half a crown, according to the same authorities, to paper Mount Everest from base to peak. As no one appears to have put this theory into practice, one must just take their word for it. I have, however, seen bathrooms

entirely covered, roof and walls, with paper marks, of which the aggregate value—several millions—was equal to less than one penny.

The entire savings of the German people disappeared. The "rentier" classes were the first to suffer most severely. Workers, paid daily or weekly, received at least living wages, but those who depended on fixed incomes, which did not change as the mark fell, faced sheer starvation. The widow, the ex-officer—the retired civil servant who, for example, had been granted a pension at the rate of one hundred pounds a year—was in 1920 actually receiving less than ten pounds a year. A little later it became valueless. It was no uncommon thing in those days to hear that "So and so had put his last shilling in rubber." The gruesome significance of this was that he had bought a couple of yards of rubber tubing, fastened one end to the gas-bracket and taken the other end into bed with him.

For months—for years—this absurd inflation went on. At first the exchange dropped slowly. Few then believed that the mark would not recover, and enormous speculation was indulged in all over the world. It is estimated that the total losses incurred in this way were about four hundred million pounds. Before it was realised that the mark was valueless, a certain proportion of the people benefited. Mortgages, for instance, were paid off at pre-war rate of exchange long after the mark had fallen to less than one hundredth of its nominal value. But the majority were losers. Prince Blücher, for example, sold the Blücher Palais in the Pariser Platz—a property worth

nearly one million sterling—when it was thought the mark would recover, for a sum which, at the time of the sale, was equal to several hundred thousand pounds. By the time the money was paid and transferred from German to a stable currency, the value had depreciated to a few hundred pounds, which was all Prince Blücher got.

At the time when the slump moved in weekly spasms, one could cope with it, but when eventually this became a daily and even an hourly occurrence, it was a different matter. There was always a rush to spend, or to buy foreign currency the moment one received German marks. Small exchange banks sprang up in hundreds in every town. The poor, hysterical population was robbed in every direction. As soon as the mark dropped, the price of everything went up. The most exciting game at this time was to rush to the nearest shop the moment the rate fell and buy goods ere the new prices were marked. Once, I remember, during the luncheon hour someone called out in the Adlon restaurant that the mark had crashed from five thousand to ten thousand. Instantly everyone rose, and without hat or coat rushed out to the nearest shop to spend every German note he had.

It was impossible at times for the Reichsbank to turn out new notes quickly enough to keep pace with the fall in value, although at one time no less than two thousand people were employed merely in printing them. The result was that enormous quantities of paper money had to be carried.

Eventually the dollar standard of payment was

introduced and many of the shops had dial indicators showing the downward progress of the mark. The hour-hand represented the dollar, and the minute signs—marks. The shops were in constant touch with the Central Exchange, and the hand was moved on as the rate altered. There was then no fixed price of anything in German currency. Every half-hour or so the shop assistants had to work out puzzling sums before the new German price could be arrived at.

My Scotch servant added considerably to the nervous shocks with which one was plentifully provided in those days. He invariably estimated income in terms of the pre-war value of the mark and expenditure at the rate of the moment. His accounting at the end of the week was on these lines :

“Ye gave me five pounds on Monday. I paid twenty-two thousand pounds for shoe polish and a clo’es brush ; seventeen thousand five hundred pounds for apricot jam—it’s up this week—and a wee jar at that ; then there’s the laundry—extra sheets and pillow cases for your visitor—forty-three thousand pounds seven and six, credit balance—two and two.”

There was a general and quite fallacious belief that the Jews were responsible for the catastrophic vagaries of the exchange, and popular opinion at one time ran so high against them that anyone whose facial characteristics betrayed Hebrew origin, was safer at home than in the street—particularly if he looked well fed and was well dressed. Of these, several were stripped in the streets of hats, overcoats, gloves and so forth. The despoilers, as a rule, were good-natured crowds. If the Jew submitted quietly,

he was usually permitted to retain an essential portion of apparel. Not so the obstreperous one. He was lucky if he were allowed by the hilarious crowd to hail a taxi-cab in socks and singlet. But the taxi driver wanted payment in advance and generally, after a glance at the pocketless fare, drove on.

At the corner of the Friedrich Strasse and the Französischer Strasse, a very fat Jew was one day held up. He proved exceptionally truculent, and was therefore denuded of all but his bowler hat and a very short shirt. A rope was slung over a lamp standard and a noose placed round the victim's chest under his arms. As he was drawn up, whirling rudderless round and round, the delighted crowd yelled : " The dollar is rising," and, as he was lowered, they shrieked : " The dollar is falling." This went on until the police, interfering, provided the shivering and terrified man with a couple of newspapers, thus enabling him to depart in decency, if not in dignity.

Everyone bought, or tried to buy, foreign currency, preferably English or American. Exporters got their foreign buyers to hold payment and to credit the amount due, in order that the money might not be returned to Germany to be converted into German currency and disappear in the general slump. The Government issued orders against this buying of foreign currency, but these were disregarded. People were searched in the open street and foreign money, for which no satisfactory explanation was forthcoming, was simply removed from one's wallet and confiscated. No one, without special permission, was allowed to leave the country with more than a small amount of

money. On one occasion, at the frontier, I was led to a small room and ordered by two customs agents to strip. They asked me no questions, but, in a very thorough and efficient manner, examined me and my clothing. Finding very little money, they looked puzzled—evidently they had had some information from the train on which I had come about foreign money with which I was provided—and decided to begin the search over again.

“Why,” I asked them, “instead of giving yourselves all this trouble, don’t you *ask* me what money I have? You will find it between the pages of that novel.” At the same time I gave them my official passes. They were very apologetic then, but asked me why I had not shown them my papers at first. They didn’t mind when I told them that, in the first place, it was because they hadn’t asked me any questions, and, secondly, because I wanted to know exactly how they worked.

The wiser heads in the country realised that such chaotic economic conditions could not continue, and, pressed by the allied countries to put their internal affairs in order, they did eventually stabilise the currency. A new mark, called the Rentenmark, was introduced. This Rentenmark was issued at the rate of one mark for every billion marks of the existing paper currency.

The “security” for the new currency was a mortgage raised on the agriculture, trade and industry of Germany. Mr. Daniels, in *The Rise of the German Republic*, remarks: “The whole project thus relied on the security of a mortgage which could not be

foreclosed. It is the perfect example of the restoration of confidence by a confidence trick."

But a mark was a mark again. The débris of her shattered financial skyscrapers had been swept away. The foundations of a new, if distant, prosperity were laid.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## THE LOST LEADERS

IT was in 1921 that I first met Prince Max of Baden. I was on my way from Rome to Berlin when I decided to accept an invitation I had had to visit him at Salem. From one side of Lake Constance I telephoned to Salem at the other, and a few hours later I was being greeted at Friedrichshafen—near which Salem lay—by Prince Max's private secretary, a former Oxford Rhodes scholar, Herr Kurt Hahn. During our drive from the little lake-side town to the castle, Hahn told me that Salem now housed a school run on English public school lines. It had been started by Prince Max having one or two boys at the castle to be educated with his son, Prince Berthold. Now there were about a hundred scholars, boys and girls, and a complete staff of qualified teachers. Sport—a new departure for German schools—was as important a factor as in English schools. I stayed three days at Salem and saw the entire working of the establishment. I took a class in English one morning and was astounded by the facility with which small boys of eleven read *Treasure Island*. I had luncheon with the school that day. Afterwards the whole assembly lay flat on their backs for half-an-hour on the floor of a large recreation room. This was for



the digestion. At the request of the headmaster I played Scotch music on the piano for them during this *dolce far niente*. The effect, however, of reels, schottisches and strathspeys on the gastric juices was alarming, and only counteracted in time by a quick transition, at the command of the matron, to a Chopin nocturne.

Hahn supervised the games. He assured me that the salvation of German manhood, now that the military system had collapsed, would be found in sport. Certainly, sport has developed to an astonishing degree in Germany. Some such outlet, some safety valve, for the vitality of the youth of Germany, to replace the discipline of the former compulsory military service, was absolutely necessary. Football, rowing, boxing, tennis, are now as important a part of ordinary life in Germany as in England. Massed physical training is very popular, and this, combined with sport, is having a wholesome and refining effect on the physique of the race. The heavy, flabby type is disappearing, and the younger generation is spare and wiry.

I was struck that day at Salem by the absence of the plump "Backfisch" and "fat boy" types. I asked a small "Diana," who was throwing a javelin with uncanny accuracy, if she was doing it for a future war. "No," she answered pertly, "I'm doing it for my future figure!"

Prince Max was not at Salem when I arrived, and I spent the first day with his wife, a gentle, sweet, quiet woman. She was by birth a Princess of Brunswick, a daughter of the last Duke of Cumberland.

Her mother was a sister of our Queen Alexandra. Prince Max had two children, a boy and a girl, who were hard at work in school. I saw little of them then. In later times I met them frequently. Prince Berthold came to Oxford and Princess Marie Alexandra married Prince Wolfgang of Hesse, and now whenever my wanderings take me through Frankfort I have my bath and breakfast at their house.

Princess Max was still a young woman with a lovely skin and snow-white hair, which I do not think was accounted for by grief, as the family life at Salem seemed the epitome of peace and tranquillity. Salem had originally been a monastery, and in spite of the crowd of school children, and of the hundred or so other inhabitants of the castle, something of cloistered calm seemed to reign over it all.

We dined, the Princess and I, at a small table in the middle of a vast hall. The shaded candles which lit up the table seemed but to accentuate the gloom of the surrounding space. We were like two little dots on a raft on an ocean. Only, when far away on the distant horizon, the service door opened and the butler appeared, did one get the sense of some reality beyond. When the door closed and the light behind was obscured, one heard only the footsteps, dimmed at first by distance, of the unseen servant. Then out of the darkness on one's left was thrust an arm bearing a flat dish of gigantic proportions, on which, also like two dots lost on an ocean, lay two small trout or cutlets.

Economy was practised as an example. There was always enough and seldom a surplus. After dinner we went to her Royal Highness's boudoir, and in the

cosy "Biedermeier" room one felt one had been comfortably washed ashore.

We expected Prince Max to arrive at any moment.

I picked up his photograph that stood on the Princess's table. A fine aristocratic face, nothing Teutonic about it, except perhaps, the fairness. I pondered over this portrait of a man of whom there was, at that time, more diversity of opinion than of any other man in the country.

"Prince Max was a traitor." "Prince Max was the saviour of his country." "Prince Max ought to be hanged." "Prince Max ought to be made Kaiser or President of the Republic." "Prince Max played a false and double game," one of the Kaiser's sons said to me; while one of the Kaiser's sisters told me that "Prince Max could not do a dishonourable thing to save his life."

I had read all I could on the subject of the Kaiser's abdication and of Prince Max's action with regard to it, and I was left with little doubt that in his position of Chancellor there had been no other honourable course open to him save the one he followed.

I was holding his photograph in my hand when he came in.

"I was just wondering what you were like," I said by way of explanation.

"And I, you," he responded. "But you," and he glanced smilingly at the photograph, "had the advantage of me. I had nothing to go by."

He was tall, slim and straight. *Rassig* the Germans call it, which is a rather better word for my meaning than merely "well-bred." A woman, who had once

been in love with him without his knowing it, told me she used to lose sight of his good looks in the *goodness* of his face. I could see what she meant. It was something of the face of an ascetic, certainly of an idealist. He was dressed in a well-cut, somewhat faded grey tweed suit, and as he leaned with his back against the big stove, warming his hands on the hot tiles, one could see that he was a very handsome man.

There are three men who stand out in my memory as perfect conversationalists—three orators whose oratory was no ornament treasured for special occasion, but which naturally graced the commonplaces of everyday conversation: Lord Rosebery, Walter Rathenau and Prince Max of Baden. Three men whose voices never lost their charm, whose sentences were always beautifully moulded. All were linguists, and Prince Max and Rathenau used to dip without scruple or hesitation into other languages for words or phrases which they felt would more effectively colour the picture they were painting.

At the time of this visit the London Conference had just ended. Reparation terms imposed and "Sanctions" threatened.

"Sanctions," Prince Max said, "would never force a solution of the reparation problem, but would undoubtedly lead to grave difficulties, not only in Germany, but in the allied countries." He was honestly disturbed by the fact that Britain now no longer seemed to have the power of independent thought or action.

"What hold France has over England," he said to me one day, "it is impossible to conceive. Does

Lloyd George already hear the guns of Calais, or is he being blackmailed ?

“ I look on Lloyd George as a man of genius. I can only ask : ‘ Has anything happened to him ? Is it that he is worn out, leaving himself in the hands of advisers who have neither the intelligence nor the foresight which have been such conspicuous qualities in this extraordinary man ? ’ ”

Speaking of the responsibility for the War, he said, “ In my opinion, after the mobilisation of Russia, it was quite impossible to prevent Germany going to war. I can give you my oath that the Kaiser never wanted war. I cannot speak for those who surrounded him. The Kaiser loved the trappings of the soldier, and a better War Lord in time of peace, processions and parades, it would have been difficult to find. But, although he was by no means a coward, he had none of the instincts of the fighting soldier. He knew this himself, and his knowledge of it accounted, in a great measure, for the warlike camouflage with which he covered himself.”

With regard to the future of Germany, Prince Max thought that undoubtedly a monarchy was desirable, but should not express any opinion as to whether it would be Hohenzollern or another line. “ I am convinced that the country will be happier under a monarchy, but let the people who pulled it down build it up again in its own time. Let them clean up their ‘ own mess ’,” he said, quoting the King of Saxony, “ and when there is a clean land to offer to the Sovereign, let the people offer it to the man of their choice.

“ Apart from the question of responsibility I believe in the Reparations—the loser must pay. Settle this question of ‘ how much ’ and ‘ how,’ and I believe you will have settled Europe.

“ You would probably doubt my sincerity if you heard me pray : ‘ God give us a strong England.’ A strong England would mean a sensible England ; a sensible England would hold the guiding reins of France, and one could then hope that this unhappy Europe might be dragged from the ruts of ruin to the plains of prosperity.”

A few days after my departure from Salem I received a letter from Prince Max :

“ . . . I stand by my opinion that only a mutual or international investigation of the Reparation question can clear the horizon. I fear you will never believe us, and I for my part regard with the utmost suspicion every demand or decision coming from the Allies, in the spirit of Versailles. Besides, all Europe is interested in the solution of these economic and financial questions which are terribly complicated and give rise to so many suspicions. When I regard my own position caused by the taxes, I cannot believe that the Allies are right in pretending that France or England is taxed more heavily, and there must be a fundamental error or a voluntary propaganda falsification of the truth which makes such an assertion possible.

“ On the other hand I would have the greatest aversion to follow those voices coming from England, who say, ‘ Begin to pay and in five or ten years

the aspect of the world will have changed and there will be no Versailles Treaty any more.' I would call this heaping falsehood on falsehood. Probably England would be glad if we acted in this way, because it would pacify France and make things easier. But what Englishman can take the responsibility for the truth of this promise, that things will change early enough to save us from absolute bankruptcy? My belief is that Germany cannot afford to follow an untruthful line of conduct, that our best ally in this question—as well as in that of the culpability—is *Truth*. A mutual or international investigation of both questions is the only way I see which promises to bring us, and the world in general, nearer this aim. . . .

"You will always be welcome to the Princess and to me whenever your road leads you into our part of the map, and not only *für politische Zwecke* (on political grounds). . . ."

My way never afterwards took me into that "part of the map." Only once again was I ever to see him. Five years later in Florence, in the house of Queen Sophie of Greece, I met him—but broken in health and slow of speech. He came into the room haltingly, leaning on the arm of his wife, whose face was shadowed with anxiety. I scarcely recognised him. When I took my leave of him, he said :

"When I am better . . . come back to Salem . . . and we shall tell each other . . . once again . . . how this old world . . . ought to be . . . put right !"

*Requiescat in pace !*

Another statesman whose life was dedicated to the cause of "putting this old world right" was Walter Rathenau. In 1922, when I first met him—he was Minister for Reconstruction then—he had achieved a position in Germany never hitherto attained by a Jew in any Christian country since the days of Benjamin Disraeli. Born of wealthy parents, richly endowed with literary and artistic talents, a Socialist, despite the fact that he was the first Hebrew to whom the doors of Hohenzollern hospitality were opened. A man full of ideals—but no mere idealist. Someone has described him a "realist fifty years ahead of his time."

The reactionaries of the Right saw in him a menace to their schemes for the restoration of monarchical principles and floated their fears and hatred on a wave of fierce anti-semitism. Ludendorff, who at that time had still a considerable following among officers of the old régime, with all to gain and nothing to lose by such a restoration, had deliberately torn sentences of Rathenau's from their context, and flung them as evidence of treachery to an ignorant and hysterical section of the public eager to blame their shipwreck on a Jewish Jonah rather than on the catastrophic leadership of their former rulers. Throughout his term of office as Minister for Reconstruction, Rathenau had weathered the storm, encouraged by the unswerving loyalty of those who knew and trusted him, and who recognised his ability and the selflessness of his aims. But from the day when, under the Chancellorship of Wirth he became Secretary for Foreign Affairs, his life was not worth a moment's purchase.



The State took steps to guard him, but the constant attendance of the plain-clothes police was irksome and periodically he insisted on their being withdrawn.

The circumstances of our first meeting were interesting. Frau Geheimrat Deutsch, wife of the head of the General Electric Co., in which Rathenau was a partner, gave a party in honour of Richard Strauss, the composer. Sir Basil Thompson had just then been in Berlin, and lunching with him, I met Deutsch, who invited me to the party. We seldom went to German parties in those days, but I can recall distinctly that, when I got that invitation, words that Rathenau had written flashed into my mind, "A nod of greeting . . . a luncheon . . . may mean the birth or ultimate fate of some momentous affair."

It was a wonderful party. Strauss had conducted his ballet, "Joseph in Egypt," that night at the Opera for the first time in Berlin. All artistic Berlin had been asked to the Deutsch house to meet him. My presentation to Frau Deutsch by my host caused her much astonishment but fortunately no embarrassment. She was a tall commanding-looking woman with a hooked nose, glistening eyes and a shock of coal-black hair. She was a sister of Otto Kahn, and to my mind, an even greater personality than her brother.

"I don't know why you were asked or why you came," was her genial greeting, "but as you are here we'll have to make the best of you—and you of us. But remember, no intrigue—no plotting—no searching for machine-guns behind secret panels. Only

music to soften your heart—if indeed the Entente ever employs anyone with a heart.”

What an evening ! I noticed particularly among the guests a tall man who leaned against the wall, arms folded, eyes closed, completely absorbed by the music, uninterested otherwise in the entertainment. My hostess introduced me to him.

“His Excellency Dr. Walter Rathenau.” “Be careful”—she warned him after she had named me—“he is of the enemy and he will probably search you for arms,” and with a kindly smile which belied her fear that I had come provided with a search warrant, she left us.

Lazily Rathenau opened his eyes and came back to earth. He was a tall, handsome, bald-headed man with a strange oriental cast of features. Count Harry Kessler in his biography gives this excellent description of him :

“More negroid than European. Deep-set, cool, roe-brown, slow eyes ; measured gestures and a deep voice.”

“What seeks the Man of Wrath in these peaceful pastures?” he asked me in a low, sad voice. And ere I could answer he had slipped his hand into his hip pocket and produced a small automatic pistol. Weighing it in the palm of his hand, he said, “In some parts of this country of mine companies of men are marching to the rhythm of these words :

‘Shoot down Walter Rathenau,  
The God-accursed Jewish sow.’”

In a slow, soft monotone he repeated this. He was smiling slightly—but his eyes were those of one who had been terribly hurt. I closed his fingers round the weapon. “Put it away, Excellency ; may you never have to use it.” That evening we became friends, and the following night I dined with him in his house in the Grünewald—the first of many such memorable occasions.

I loved listening to Rathenau, and I often used to feel that he got a sensuous pleasure in his own shimmering cascade of oratory. French, German, English, Italian—he was a master in each. At one of the World Conferences—I forget which—he was not satisfied with the efficiency of his interpreter and made his speeches in German, French and English, with an ease which far surpassed that of the official translators.

When he visited England I wrote to Lord Haldane and asked him to receive him. Rathenau returned charmed with Haldane, who wrote me after Rathenau’s death a few months later, “Ah, Rathenau ! He was one in a million, and Europe needed him and misses him.”

It was shortly after he returned from England that I visited him—for the last time. At his gates, two plain-clothes police challenged me—and allowed me to pass. Rathenau was playing the piano ; his eyes were closed, and he did not at first notice my entry. He was improvising softly. The room was in darkness save from the green glow of the emerald-shaded lamp, which suffused his face with an unearthly light, and which, with the tricks of shadow, made the face

like that of a corpse. On realising my presence he jumped up and flooded the room with light. The illusion of death passed.

I told him—knowing the constant danger of assassination he ran—that I was glad to see he was being guarded.

“Oh! they are not surely still here,” he said with annoyance, and going to the telephone, he rang up the Home Office and ordered the removal of the guard. I begged him to be reasonable, but he said, “What will be, will be. I have a work to do—perhaps not to consummate. When my hour has struck—and not before—I shall be taken. Then, if I leave this poor country a little nearer peace—even if still a long way from prosperity—I shall feel that I have not left it too soon.”

He was in a happy mood. By the time I left that night—or rather next morning, for one never left Rathenau early—the police had been withdrawn, and were never replaced.

Two days later he left his house at eleven o'clock for the Foreign Office in an open car. As it moved off, another car drew alongside and, as the two ran together, a young man stood up, aimed a machine pistol point blank at the unsuspecting Minister and riddled him with bullets. Another youth threw a hand grenade which exploded under the already dying man.

A young hospital nurse who happened to be passing sprang into the Minister's car and Rathenau died as she held him.

They brought him back to his house and laid him

on the floor of the library, where a few nights before he had said to me :

“ I have a work to do—perhaps not to consummate.”

## CHAPTER XXIX

## THE CROWN PRINCE'S APPEAL

“GIVE a German a human being to study,” General Bingham used to say, “and he’ll make a mess of it. Give him a ‘thing’ and he will probably do better than anyone else.”

I learned a great deal both by precept and example from General Bingham, and as a result my dealings with the German officials were from first to last free of much of the embarrassment to which the discussion of vexed questions might have easily given rise. One of my opposite numbers in the German Liaison Department was a Major von Dittfurth. I knew he spoke English, but not one English word would he utter. Sometimes when I was stuck for some technical German word, he would stand, gazing woodenly at me—knowing all the time perfectly well what I was seeking—until I had laboriously explained myself in some round-about way. I liked him from the first, and his stubborn consistency convinced me that once I had thawed him the work of the department would proceed more rapidly and more to our mutual advantage. I mentioned him one day to Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein.

“Von Dittfurth,” he said. “I know him. An awfully nice chap. Lives at Caecilienhof and looks

after the Crown Prince's boys. Been in England—Norfolk, I think—told me all about it ; had a friend there called Margery something or other. Nice people. Should think he hates working with you, but we must have a good class of fellow on this kind of work."

Shortly after I had had this conversation with Prince Albert, von Dittfurth telephoned to me one evening and asked me to get General Bingham's opinion on a certain question that night.

"You'd better come here and see me at the Adlon," I said.

"Will that be necessary ? "

"I'm certainly not going to discuss it over the telephone," I said.

He came. I left him, standing, in spite of my offer of an arm-chair, in a state of frozen immobility, while I sought the General. He was still on the same spot and in the same condition when I returned five minutes later. I handed him the reply, and with a click of the heels and a curt "*Ich danke*," he turned to go.

I poured out a couple of glasses of Rheinwein—I had the bottle ready—and as he reached the door I said in an off-hand way in English :

"Oh, by the way, Major, have you heard anything from Margery lately ? "

A gasp—and the icicle cracked.

"Well," said the astonished man with an accent he must have picked up in Norfolk, "Well—I'll—be—damned ! "

"Have a drink," I said, while he stared his blank

amazement. With a sudden effort he pulled himself together ; his jaws snapped close, and he placed the untouched wine-glass on my piano.

“ *Verzeihung*—— ”

“ Too late,” I said. “ As an icicle your days are numbered.”

I pushed the arm-chair under him, put the glass back in his hand, and lit him a cigarette.

“ You and I will probably have to work for years together,” I said. “ The better we get on, the quicker it will be over, and the sooner you will be rid of us.”

Dittfurth looked at me over the rim of his glass and his expression slowly changed. He gave a chuckle.

“ *Prosit*,” he said, jumping to his feet and draining the glass.

“ *Prosit*,” I said. “ Have another ? ”

“ Tell me,” he said, the bewildered look returning, “ How on earth—— ? ”

“ Margery, you mean ? Oh ! I don’t know anything about her. I just used her to crack the ice ! ”

I hope Dittfurth’s services to his country have been appreciated. For years we worked together, his department and mine often at cross purposes, but his tact and intelligence helped to smooth many matters which might have given infinite and unnecessary trouble and would have certainly caused much superfluous and acrimonious correspondence.

About a year after the melting process in the Adlon, Dittfurth asked me to visit him at Caecilienhof, the home of the Crown Prince at Potsdam. A one-horsed brougham, sadly the worse for wear, and



an aged coachman in a faded royal livery met me at the Potsdam station, and drove me a couple of miles to the picturesque English-looking house that the Crown Prince had built for and named after the young Princess Cécilie of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, whom he had married eighteen years previously. Von Dittfurth met me at the door, and in his comfortable bachelor room we had coffee. We were joined by a Major von Müldner, the Crown Prince's A.D.C., just arrived from Wieringen. One conclusion I came to that afternoon was that the Crown Prince had shown more shrewdness in the choice of his friends and advisers than his father had done before him.

Outside the windows I could see a team of boys playing "Soccer." Dittfurth whistled, made a signal, and two of the players detached themselves and came towards the house. "I'd like you to meet the Crown Prince's two eldest boys," Dittfurth said. "They go to the local school here and to-day being a half-holiday, they have got a few class-mates down to play footer."

The boys, awkward, caked with grime—one of them bleeding at the knee—came in and greeted me with all the healthy schoolboy's repugnance for being shown off. Frank, ordinary, strapping lads. The elder, Wilhelm, who, but for the course which events had taken, would one day have been Emperor, was a fair, slim, raw-boned, uneven-toothed, but pleasant-looking lad of about sixteen; the other, Louis-Ferdinand, reminded me a little of the pictures of his mother, dark-haired and dark-eyed. We chatted for

a few minutes, but I could see by their surreptitious glances towards the window where their immediate interest lay.

"Let them go," I said to von Dittfurth, and with a whoop of delight they vanished to join the butcher's son and the baker's son in a rough and tumble struggle towards the goal.

We stood at the window and watched them for a minute.

"If their grandfather had been brought up like that," I said, "and had learned like them to know and understand human beings and human nature—perhaps——"

"Now," said Dittfurth, "you know the boys; come and meet their mother."

"Good gracious!" I was startled into saying, "she surely won't want to meet *me*," but I followed him nevertheless. I remembered her as I had seen her last in London. A large-eyed, graceful slip of a girl; tall and willowy, like a dark flower on a long slim stalk. The Crown Prince used to boast in those days that he found her all by himself. "Papa had nothing to do with it—she's my own discovery."

We passed through the main hall—a handsome panelled room, then, like all the other principal rooms, in disuse—into a small sitting room hung and upholstered with rich red brocade.

The windows looked out over a tangled unkept garden on to the blue water of the Wannsee. A large, handsome woman, unattractively and heavily dressed in unrelieved black, received the bow I made as I looked around and behind her, for the dainty sprite

with the laughing elfin eyes that my memory conjured up.

"What did you think of my boys," she asked, giving me her hand.

It was she—I had not recognised her.

We sat down and when I looked at her and talked with her and found the face scarcely changed, her eyes as glowing and her dark hair as lovely and luxuriant as ever, I felt a swift ebbing of my momentary disappointment. And then she told me of her life—a lonely woman, six children, and no money.

"Look round you—the house in disuse and disrepair, the garden a wilderness of weeds!"

"No money?" I said.

"Oh, no. Not of our own any more. We don't get it. Every month I have to make a list of what I want for the children, myself, the house and the few servants we still keep. I send this to the Finance Ministry in Berlin. Of course, I make it as modest as I can, but if they think I have asked too much they just take that amount off."

"And then—when you don't get enough——?"

She was silent.

"Oh, then," broke in Major von Dittfurth, "her Royal Highness probably doesn't want to tell you. She just gets in the train, goes up to Berlin and sells a brooch or a ring."

"That doesn't bother me," she went on, "so much as the children. Six children, four of them boys, all growing up, and I just can't cope with them any longer successfully. They need their father." She paused, and then turning squarely to me she said,

"I'm going to ask you to do something for me. Will you help me to get my husband back?"

"But, Ma'am," I said, somewhat taken aback, "so far as I am aware there is nothing to prevent your husband coming back—no agreement——"

"No, I know what you mean. Nothing legal. 'It is for Germany to decide,' you would say. True—but Germany is afraid to allow him to return for fear of giving offence to the Entente. But, if England and France could be depended upon to make no difficulties about his return I feel sure that Germany would take the view that it would not matter whether he returns or stays where he is. If there is any fear that he might mix himself up with any political movement take my assurance that it is unfounded."

"An undertaking from him, to that effect, might help," I suggested.

"Then that undertaking shall be given."

"You *will* remember?" she said once more at parting. "*I* want my husband and those children need their father!"

Some weeks later Prince Albert brought me a letter. "It is addressed to me," he said, "but it is intended for you"—and he handed me the following:

"MY DEAR UNCLE,

"You are aware how terribly anxious I am to return to the home from which I have now been away for seven years. As the position of the present German Government is so dependent on the Allied countries, it would be of the greatest

value to me if the English Government took no steps to prevent my return, and if they could contrive to allay any excitement and trouble which the French will be sure to raise. I should, therefore, be most grateful if you would place my points in view of this important question before someone who can do something in the matter :

“ 1. Years before the War I always took the standpoint that Germany and England must go together : I told our leading Statesmen this, time after time. Every decent opportunity, however, was ignored.

“ 2. Several times during the War I maintained that the War should be brought to an end, and even wrote this to my father, to the Prime Minister and to General Headquarters. Their reply was that there was no possibility of making peace with any country.

“ 3. Although I was nearly always at variance with the Government in question of foreign and home politics, they now try to identify me with the Kaiser.

“ 4. I am 40 years of age, and for three years I have vegetated under the most impossible conditions here on this primitive island, where there is not even such a thing as a bathroom.

“ 5. I suffer from the absolute lack of any useful occupation.

“ 6. My children are growing up, and I have no influence whatever on their education.

“ 7. My properties round Oels require, particularly at this time, the personal supervision of the

owner. You, as a proprietor, will understand this.

"8. I am absolutely home-sick.

"9. My only wish is to settle in my own country, to live and to die as an ordinary citizen.

"10. I condemn everything in the way of a Putsch, whether from Right or Left.

"11. We require peace, order, unity and work just now in Germany.

"12. I believe now, as formerly, that an understanding with England will point the only way which can lead Germany and Europe to a condition of health and prosperity.

"Your affectionate nephew,

"(*Signed*) WILHELM.

"Wieringen.

"21-10-21."

"You don't know the Crown Prince," said Prince Albert. "I do, and I give you my word of honour that every word of that letter is true. He won't do any harm; he's much too sensible."

Lord Rosebery was not an admirer of the Crown Prince. "I cannot believe the Crown Prince was really a sensible and moderate young man," he wrote in reply to a letter of mine. "He used to say to casual English acquaintances, 'I am sorry we shall have to fight you some day,' and things of that kind, which seemed to point in another direction."

Later when I knew the Crown Prince, however, I could only endorse the favourable opinion. His appearance belies him. His curiously-shaped head

makes him look unintelligent. He is, in fact, remarkably shrewd, exceptionally well-informed, and with unusual powers of deduction and appreciation. Possibly his long, miserable exile has ripened his outlook and judgment, but all those whom I have met who knew him before and during the War have a good word for him. "There's better stuff in young William than his father ever gave him an opportunity of proving," was the consensus of opinion of those who were in a position to know.

In due time the Crown Prince returned to Germany and to the bosom of his family, and in the ten years that have passed he has abided by his undertaking. His popularity has increased and the Crown Princess is adored.

## CHAPTER XXX

## SANCTIONS

WHEN the Allied Reparation terms were announced, they staggered the Germans almost as much as the terms of the Peace Treaty had done. "Reparation on an impossible scale. Disarmament to an extent that leaves Germany a prey to Bolshevism and unprotected against invasion; the War Criminal problem unsolved, though modified."

In the event of non-acceptance, or failure to fulfil, the Allies threatened Sanctions. The Ruhr, the principal industrial area of Germany, was to be occupied.

The Germans were convinced that the terms had deliberately been made impossible in order that the French might have an excuse for occupying the Ruhr.

"Six thousand million pounds for reparations." How, except in the expectation of some phenomenal trade increase, could Germany accept the responsibility for finding such a sum in cash or in kind? If Germany's trade were to revive to such an extent, it was pointed out, not unjustly, she must become a dangerous competitor to the allied countries. And no German believed that such competition would



be permitted. Public opinion was against acceptance of the terms on the plea that they were impossible.

Dr. Wirth, who in May 1921 succeeded Fehrenbach as Prime Minister, had, in order to prevent, if possible, the occupation of the Ruhr, accepted the terms unconditionally in the belief that by an earnest endeavour to carry them out he would prove their impossibility. This policy of fulfilment was begun, but the breakdown was only a matter of time. The Germans trusted that the Allies would recognise the fact that they were genuinely trying to do all in their power, and that due allowance for non-fulfilment would be made. But France, who had based her claim for reparation on what she *wanted* Germany to pay, and not on what Germany *could* pay, would not believe the tales of poverty. She was persuaded that the assets of Germany were being deliberately concealed, and, in January, 1923, the occupation of the Ruhr by the French and Belgians took place, the pretext being that Germany had defaulted with regard to the delivery of telegraph poles. Britain stood aside and took no part in the occupation—wisely, for British law advisers pronounced the occupation to be illegal.

I well remember the night on which Sanctions were imposed, and the French and Belgian troops marched into the Ruhr. There was a ball at the French Embassy in Berlin. The Pariser Platz was crowded, on a cold winter night, by an enraged mob who shouted curses and hurled insults at the arriving guests. They refrained from actual violence only because they realised that vengeance, which they

would be powerless to prevent, would be wreaked further on their country. Nero fiddling while Rome burned was, they felt, but a kindly prank compared with the callousness of the victorious Allies dancing at that moment when Germany had again been humiliated !

It was an unfortunate and unforeseen circumstance that the dates of the ball and the Sanctions should coincide. Inside the Embassy it was as though there were a ghost at the feast. We pulled the curtains closer and the orchestra was instructed to play with muted strings and soft pedal.

The year 1921 had been another bad one for Germany. Communist risings in Saxony were only part of the troubles. A Red Army was said to be forming all over Germany. The police force, called the " Security " Police—a body strongly disapproved of as a military organisation by the Allies—was used effectively against the rebels. The trouble was localised and dealt with area by area. The rebel forces were prevented from co-ordinating, and the little fires never became one conflagration. Coincident with this trouble came the problem of Upper Silesia. Poland wanted that part of the country, and so did Germany. A plebiscite was arranged. Silesia became a field of guerilla warfare. The Allies sent 30,000 troops to keep order. Germany collected her Silesian natives from every part of the country and sent them back to vote. The result was a majority of over 230,000 for Germany. The rejoicing was great—and short lived. Self-determination was a good

theory, but there were exceptions in putting it into practice. The accession of strength which the restoration of Upper Silesia to Germany would mean to that country was something which the Allies, particularly the French, were not disposed to permit. So it was announced that the plebiscite had not been held with a view to deciding to which nation Upper Silesia should belong, but merely in order that a frontier line could be drawn between the Polish and German areas.

Germany was in no position to do other than submit. Her explanations that without Silesia she could not possibly pay Reparations received no sympathy. Rathenau, then Minister for Reconstruction, put forward a plan that in part payment the reconstruction of the devastated areas should be carried out by the German workmen with German materials, but this would do nothing to help French employment or French trade, and was, moreover, not in accordance with the letter of the Peace Treaty. So the scheme was rejected.

There was also the vexed question of Home Defence Armies, and the prospect of serious conflict with Bavaria and other southern States.

With all this to contend against, it might reasonably have been supposed that Germany's reluctance to accept without protest financial obligations which even in normal times would have been a strain, was not a sign of mere obstinacy, but was, in reality, the expression of her honest belief that what had been demanded of her was impossible.

In addition to the grievance of the plebiscite, Germany was writhing under what she considered the

injustice perpetrated upon her by the Peace of Versailles, in the shape of the "Polish Corridor." This spike of enemy country driven into the body of Germany, separating, as it did, almost the whole of West Prussia and Posen from the mother-country, was causing a festering sore—and will continue to do so until it is removed. It is difficult to understand how a body of intelligent men could persuade themselves that the Corridor could ever prove a solution to the Polish-German difficulty. Two million Germans on one side of the Corridor leading to the once flourishing German port of Dantzic were separated by 21 miles of foreign territory from the remainder of their country and people. The difficulties of transport, currency, customs to be grappled with every time this strange territory was traversed may be imagined.

It is absurd to think that German militarism can be dealt with effectively by dismantling fortresses, sinking battleships, and destroying guns and ammunition while Germany has thrust upon her—or to put it more correctly, into her—a cause which must eventually inflame her 70,000,000 inhabitants to a point when they will inevitably turn to war for relief.

I recall the words of Frau Katarina von Oheim, then a member of the Reichstag, when she spoke to me on this subject:

"You may take our ships—we accept it, for we lost and must pay. You may leave us defenceless—with an army of only 100,000 men. We lost and we must pay. You may reduce us to a state bordering on destitution. We lost and we must pay. We would be resigned—

we would never want to fight again. But attempt forcibly to make Poles out of Germans, and Poland out of Germany, and you will be able to control the resultant revival of militarism only by making every German woman barren."

## CHAPTER XXXI

## TROUBLE IN BAVARIA

THERE are few parts of this world more lovely than Bavaria. Go to Berchtesgaden, Partenkirchen, the Königsee, conjure up memories of all you have seen and thought of as beautiful, and you will understand how one who has delighted in his own Scottish Highlands, in the Irish lakes, the English downs, Norway's fjords, the blue waters of Italy, Switzerland's mountains, the châteaux of the Loire, the Alhambra, India's Himalayas, Japan's Thousand Island Seas, the Rockies and the Grand Canyon, can make so bold an assertion. It is not the sort of beauty that leaves you breathless, like that of the Colorado Chasm. It is a loveliness that wraps itself round you, and fills you with a delicious sense of well-being. Stand on the high plateau above Berchtesgaden, look across the green valley to where the Watzmann family, those three peaks, raise themselves into the clouds ; let the colour of the water, the trees, the pastures and the sky seep into your soul, and you will feel as I did, that there could not be much amiss in this particular part of the world.

But unfortunately this was far from being so. There was a great deal amiss, and my presence so far from headquarters requires some explanation.

The Supreme Council in Paris dealt directly with the Central Government in Berlin, and at times had little understanding for the difficulties which beset that Government in their attempts to enforce obedience in the secondary German States. Those of us who worked in Berlin knew that much of the delay which raised indignation in Paris was not caused by stubbornness or truculence, but by the sheer inability of the Government to compel the various States to comply with orders not to their liking. Bavaria was particularly difficult. The civil population was in possession of a quantity of arms which, according to the Peace Treaty, should have been given up and destroyed. Also—and this was most important—Bavaria maintained a Home Defence Army, the *Einwohnerwehr*, which, in spite of repeated warnings from Paris, the Central Government had not succeeded in disbanding. Any attempt to coerce Bavaria would have merely caused civil war ; failure to carry out the Allies' conditions was to risk the imposition of Sanctions. The Government was once more between the devil and the deep sea. Prussia had pleaded with Bavaria—Bavaria had defied Prussia. Paris did not, or would not, believe in the impotence of Prussia, and repeated her orders, again accompanied by threats. The Government could, of course, resign—and make way for—what ? For nothing certainly that could in any way simplify the home or foreign situation.

One night shortly before Sanctions had been imposed, I received in Berlin an express letter heavily sealed with the royal arms. It was from H.R.H. the Duke Saxe Coburg of Gotha. He asked me if I

would meet him and hear a first-hand account of the difficulties in which his particular State was involved. He was now, of course, only a private individual, but his interest in his country and adopted people was no less now than it had been before he was deposed, and he felt that a clearer understanding by the Allies of Germany's position was essential. This meeting, he thought, should be private, and he suggested that, as a visit from him to me in Berlin, or from me to him in Coburg, would be likely to cause comment, we should fix some other meeting place.

It was no desire of the Allies that Germany should be driven to a dangerous extreme, and authentic information at a time when we were flooded with spurious, was always welcome. There was thus no difficulty in getting permission to fall in with the Grand Duke's proposal. I left the choosing of a rendezvous to his Royal Highness, and a week later I sat in a small comfortable waiting room in the house of a Dresden dentist. A stout, flushed little woman, labouring under ill-controlled excitement, came in and informed me in an awe-struck, but proud, whisper, that the Herr Doktor was engaged on a royal tooth but would not be long now. A delicious smell of cooking pervaded the apartment. I had left Berlin at an early hour and I was very hungry. I found myself analysing the odour and decided that the Herr Doktor was going to eat *gespickte Lende* or *Hasenrücken mit sahen Sose*, and this, I concluded, after further olfactory research, was to be accompanied by *frische Spargel mit Butter*, and other seasonable delicacies. I had lived in hotels for years and this smell of home cooking



awakened pangs in me that were scarce stilled when the Herr Doktor came in and motioned me into the other room. I went in, and closed the door on myself and the patient. The tooth had been stopped, and the Grand Duke, when he had rinsed his mouth for the last time, greeted me kindly.

He was a good-looking, tall, slim, cleanly-built young fellow. His face was lined and careworn. He had discarded the crutches he had used when I had previously seen him, and it was apparent that he was fighting a winning battle with the rheumatic trouble from which he had suffered so severely.

There, sitting in the surgery, he told me about his Country—not as a Grand Duke—not even as a deposed Grand Duke. He talked simply and earnestly, representing no throne or caste, but as one of thousands of fathers who saw their families and homes imperilled. He pictured his people and their tragedies to me. They, like the Bavarians, were terrified to be deprived of the only protection with which they could provide themselves. With their Home Defence Army and their rifles they could face the danger of Bolshevism, but without these they would be at the mercy of the Reds. The Grand Duke kept his big blue eyes questioningly, anxiously on me all the time, leaning forward in his chair as if to meet half-way my answer to his frequent and pleading “Don’t you see?” Every now and then he would relax his body, place his hands on his sides and straighten himself, “Just to take the pain out of the kinks.” He asked me to go to Bavaria and talk with the Crown Prince Rupprecht who, because he was associated with no

party or faction, would be more likely than anyone else to give a well-informed and unbiassed account of the conditions and dangers there.

I was about to take my leave when the little rotund Frau Doktor came in, accompanied by waves of the aroma of succulent dishes. Bobbing and blushing, hesitating and stammering, she informed us that it was just time for *Mittagessen*. She just *happened* to have *Hasenrücken* (I knew it was *Hasenrücken*!) with cream sauce and *Spargel mit Butter* (Didn't I know it?), *Frische Bohnen*, *Kartoffel Puree mit gerösteten Zwiebeln* and a *Mehlspeise mit Aprikosen Sose*. "Nothing more," she added apologetically, "except *eine Gemüse Suppe*, *Obst* and a *Limburger Käse*."<sup>1</sup> Anxiously she looked from one to the other of us. "Would we honour her?" I looked at the Grand Duke—the Grand Duke looked at me. "Let's?" he said softly in English to me with an inflection of interrogation. "Let's," said I, with determination and finality.

I returned to Berlin and reported the conversation with the Grand Duke to General Bingham, who decided that I had better go to Bavaria and find out if things were as I had been led to believe.

Bismarck once said, "Politics are not—as the professors imagine—a science, they are an art based on what is possible." The British policy, so far as we were permitted to apply it, was certainly based on this foundation, and no effort to discover what was possible was ever discouraged. Such effort, to be successful,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps I had better translate the principal dishes: Soup; saddle of hare; asparagus, beans, mashed potatoes and fried onions; a sweet with a fruit sauce; fruit and cheese.

had often to be made with the greatest delicacy, discretion, and sometimes, in order to avoid misunderstanding, with a certain amount of secrecy. If the reports that Bavaria would be plunged into civil war by the disarmament of the Home Defence Army were true, the Allied interests in Germany would be seriously affected, and this would be a matter of greater importance than the confiscation of 100,000 rifles. If, on the other hand, these reports were invented or exaggerated with a view to evasion of the disarmament clause of the Treaty, the relinquishment of the forbidden arms must be insisted on without delay.

I departed for Munich. Any excuse for a visit to Munich was a good one. It is one of the most agreeable towns in Europe, and the Bavarians are a hospitable, kindly, simple-living folk, who have always reminded me of my own people, the Scotch. At midnight I joined that strange throng always to be found in the "Hofbräuhaus." An enormous *Schnitzel* with potato salad cost me the equivalent of three-pence. I ate half and the kindly waitress offered to wrap up the remainder for me so that I "could take it home for tomorrow." In the courtyard I drank my "Münchener" from the top of an upturned barrel, as one does there. It was easy to make acquaintances here, and until an early hour in the morning I migrated from barrel to barrel, inducing—with little difficulty indeed—my new-made friends to talk about the subject nearest my heart, and theirs. It was the same tale always. The fear of Communism and the determination to possess arms and combat it. Not

once then, nor at any other time during my visit did I hear the expression of any desire for revenge. The Bavarian wanted to milk his cow, plough his land, drink his beer in peace. He had no use for Prussia and only contempt and abuse for the Prussian Government. He wanted Prince Rupprecht as King. If Prince Rupprecht would lead them, they would march against Prussia ; take the national government into their own hands and make Prince Rupprecht Kaiser. " If the Allies object," a Bavarian told me, " Rupprecht will soon get on their right side and square things all round. The reason the Allies are treating Germany like a dog was because they are dealing with dogs—dirty dogs—the Prussians. But, if they had someone like Rupprecht to deal with, ah ! how different everything would be."

I went to bed more anxious than ever to meet this Prince Rupprecht. I spent the following day in the museums, particularly in the *Residenz*, the former Palace of the Wittelsbachs, which, like the Kaiser's Schloss in Berlin, was now a public storehouse of national treasures. Prince Rupprecht, himself a connoisseur, was taking a personal interest in the arrangements. I mentioned to the guide that surely the idea of a deposed ruler arranging, for the benefit of his despoilers, the property of which he had been dispossessed was a little odd.

" Odd," said he. " Not a bit—when you know Prince Rupprecht."

It was advisable to make contact with some of those who could give me the official view-point of Bavaria's reluctance to disarm. That evening I dined with the

Prime Minister of Bavaria, Herr von Kahr, and Herr Escherich, who had organised the *Orgesch*, a Home Defence Army, raised after the communist rising of March 1919.

Herr von Kahr, a civil servant, was a shrewd, hard-headed, determined-looking man. He made you feel that what he had once got his teeth into might as well stop struggling. Escherich was a big, bluff handsome man. A typical woodsman. He had been one of the government foresters, and had a great reputation as an African explorer and big game hunter. He was a crack shot, and was just the type to impress and influence his countrymen.

We dined in a private apartment of the Hotel Vierjahreszeiten.

Ludendorff, who was now living in Bavaria, was to have been present, but decided at the last moment that he had better not be. He sent me a courteous message and asked me to have tea with him the next afternoon.

We sat long together after the coffee cups had been cleared away. Bavaria was, they assured me, in the gravest difficulty. The only barrier between them and Bolshevism was the Home Defence Army. The Bavarian Government, under the leadership of von Kahr, would refuse to take the responsibility of wresting from the citizens the only means of protection they had. Neither Prussia nor the Entente could, or would, protect them against a recurrence of the revolutionary horrors of 1919, and had therefore no right to make them defenceless. They asked for a compromise. Let them keep their rifles and they

would give a solemn undertaking that they would never be used save in self defence.

I argued the view of the Allies that if *all* the people were disarmed, there would be then no necessity for such self-defence measures, as the enemy, be he Bolshevik or Reactionary, would thereby also be rendered harmless.

Both Escherich and von Kahr repudiated with indignation the suggestion that either the *Orgesch* or the *Einwohnerwehr* was a weapon of any party.

"It is no more a weapon of the Right than of the Left," said Escherich. "If the Right make any attempt to bring about trouble in the country, I would place every man whom I find to be implicated with his back to the wall, and the same applies to the Left. We belong to no party. We have restored order in Bavaria, and we intend to keep it. We would be fools, madmen, and worse, were we to give up that which gives us the means of preventing a recurrence of what we have lived through. Were it not for this power in Bavaria, we would again ere this have been at the mercy of a horde of bandits and murderers. Communists and Spartacists in Bavaria are armed, and until the German Government is in a position to undertake our protection, we shall not give up the means of protecting ourselves. So soon, however, as the necessary guarantees are forthcoming, then I—and every man who is associated with me in the scheme of defence—will willingly deliver up arms. Until such time, however, Bavaria remains armed ; Bavaria remains in a position to defend its people and its homes.

"If the penalty be the occupation of the Ruhr, with the ultimate unavoidable chaos in North Germany, we, in Bavaria, shall be able to protect ourselves for a time at least."

Both stated frankly that they cared not a rap for the German Government.

"I don't trust them, for one thing," added Escherich. "I would never put any faith in anything that was not strong. The German Government simply cannot afford to be straight; it is dependent on too many different parties. Never put your faith in something from which you have taken everything. If strength breeds trust, an egg-cup ought to hold all the confidence the Entente should vouchsafe to that Government."

I asked Escherich if he did not think that the recent public performances of the *Einwohnerwehr* and the *Orgesch* were not likely to give the appearance of a revival of militarism in Bavaria, and that therefore the impression on the Entente may have been other than favourable.

"What we have to think of in the first place," replied Escherich, "is the impression it makes on the people here. These 'public performances,' as you have termed them, have had a very salutary effect on the troublesome element here and," he continued, with a shrug of his shoulders, "it is simply what I have already referred to—the lesser of two evils. When the Entente is persuaded that the means we employ are those of dire necessity, they will take a broader view of the matter."

I supposed that our meeting had been private.

My host and fellow guests were of the same opinion. Nothing but commonplaces were mentioned while the waiters were in the room. It was therefore with some surprise and alarm that I read in one of the Munich journals a day or so later a column, under scare-lines, giving what purported to be an account of what had taken place. I was described as an Adjutant of the King of England, and our serious conference was given the character of little less than a drunken orgy. The subject of our meeting was reported correctly, but the key-holing gentleman had evidently had some difficulty in hearing how it was treated and had drawn on a fertile, unscrupulous and melodramatic imagination.



## CHAPTER XXXII

## LUDENDORFF AS CRUSADER

NEXT afternoon I climbed the hill outside Munich on which Ludendorff, after his departure from Prussia, had taken up his abode. I had not seen him since that day in Berlin when he asked me to place his suggestion for a march on Moscow before the British authorities. I wondered how—knowing that that seed had fallen on stony ground—he would receive me. I had heard a good deal about him during the twenty-four hours I had been in Munich. He appeared to enjoy no greater popularity in Bavaria than he had in Prussia. He had, however, a certain following among the officers of the old régime, with whom he was commonly believed to be hatching fresh conspiracies.

It was cold on the top of the hill and icily chill in the bare hall. The house was a modern villa and the central heating, if any, seemed to be out of order. There was a queer comfortless feeling about the whole place that seemed to reflect the cold personality of the owner—but he had probably not been long enough there to be comfortably settled.

The library was warmer, but the setting of the long wooden table and stiff chairs gave the room the appearance of having been prepared for a

court-martial rather than for an afternoon tea party.

The Field Marshal came in and stood for a moment in the doorway. He appeared to be scowling—but it may have been the effect of the light. He looked much older than when I had last seen him, some eighteen months before. The full cheeks sagged, the eyes were more sunken and the flesh round them puffier. He was still erect and soldierly. His greeting was mechanical and wholly devoid of cordiality—there was indeed no reason why it should have been otherwise, as our former meeting had resulted in nothing to his advantage.

A sturdy red-cheeked peasant maid clattered in, poured out tea and clattered out again. I gulped my tea down to prevent frost-bite and ventured on a little introductory small talk :

“Your Excellency has found more comfortable quarters in Bavaria than in Berlin !”

But Ludendorff ignored my polite conversation, and went straight to what was on his mind. I suddenly realised that he was labouring under some strong emotion. His hands clutched the wooden arms of his chair and he leaned gradually more and more forward as he burned with the heat of his own emotion.

“Yes, if any part of this wretched country can be called comfortable, I suppose it is Bavaria. But the Entente, and you, England—yes England—have decided on our complete destruction, and not until you have trampled us in the mud and reduced us to utter chaos, until you have made filthy our last remnant of cleanliness—not until then will you cease

from your labour of destruction and degradation. You have torn us limb from limb and thrown our quivering body to the wolves, but to wolves that will in their day turn and devour you. And when that day comes—when Bolshevism has you by the throat, when you are down in the ruin and rot into which you have forced us” (Ludendorff leaned forward quivering and spat the words at me)—“I—shall—rejoice !”

My fellow guest, a friend of Ludendorff’s, who had accompanied me, looked frankly bewildered, dropped his monocle in his tea cup, fished it out with his finger and thumb, put it in his mouth and having sucked it clean, replaced it in his astonished face. The unexpected attack left me nothing with which to retaliate.

After a moment’s strained silence, I said encouragingly :

“Your Excellency was saying ‘I shall rejoice. I—shall—rejoice !’ Well——?”

But the incident of the eyeglass had ruined the peroration, and when Ludendorff had gathered up the broken threads of his address he continued with much less dramatic effect :

“Yes ! Because England, by her shortsightedness, her obstinate refusal to take either advice or warning—” Ludendorff was thinking of his last conversation with me, and of his own advice and warning to me—“England has been the means of the eventual, and not far distant, ruin of the world.

“Bolshevism is more than feeling for you ; the tentacles have attached themselves. The cure—if it

is not too late—is the knife, and the knife only. England, France and Germany together against Moscow ; but a Germany, sound and not diseased. A Germany fed, a Germany clothed, and—above all—a Germany disciplined.

“When England, France, Germany, Russia are again trading together, then, and only then, will Europe recover. This will *have* to be brought about, and there is only one way, the way that leads to Moscow.”

Ludendorff acknowledged there might be difficulty in getting the working man to fight against Russia, but this could be overcome by subtly making him believe that he was actually fighting *for* Russia. He could be brought to feel that it would be no war of conquest. Naturally, his national feeling would prevent him fighting unless he were assured that his own country would benefit considerably.

On being asked what he would consider a sufficient stimulus to change the Germans' present disinclination for a war against Russia to a holy enthusiasm for a war in aid of Russia, Ludendorff replied that a revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the restoration of West Prussia and Posen to Germany would probably suffice. The expenses of the “Crusade” would eventually come from Russia.

*Such was the desperate necessity of immediate combined action*, he said, *that Germany would now even consent to fight under a French command.* As a precaution against Germany playing any tricks after she was fitted out for battle, the Entente could occupy the German fortresses.

"I cannot understand the attitude of the Entente towards the *Einwohnerwehr*," he went on. "Do you still look on us as a danger? I wish to God we were, but you have drawn our teeth and torn our claws out, and now you torture us by cutting off the tail, with which we might still flick off the flies which eat their way into our vitals."

I pointed out that so far the German Government had not convinced us of the necessity or advisability of making an exception with regard to Bavaria.

"The German Government!" said Ludendorff, with an expression of utter contempt "*Diese Waschlappen*" (These dishcloths). "What are they fit for? There's not a man among them who is not afraid for his position. One eye on the Left, one on the Right. And this cross-eyed abortion is what you are content to work with! Surely the time has come when you realise that something different is required here. A government without a scrap of force! And you think that the German people are really represented by the men who signed away their birthright at Versailles and Spa. Pah! What is the Government going to do when its disarmament orders to Bavaria are laughed at? No government ought ever to have allowed itself to be in such a position."

I indicated that the effect of a refusal to disarm might be the occupation of the Ruhr.

"Occupy it—come and occupy it—no one will stop you. If it comes to a question of a Bolshevik Germany, or a Germany occupied and restored to order by the Entente, then I naturally choose the latter."

I reminded him that on the occasion of our last

interview, he had asserted that the main questions of importance for Germany at that time were "the War Criminal," the "trial of the Kaiser" and the solution of the Russian problem. Two of those had been dealt with satisfactorily. Did his Excellency not consider that his judgment on England was a little unconsidered?

"Yes!" he said more quietly. "You are right. These were very acute questions, and perhaps in the hopelessness of the present, I forgot your country's part in them."

The grimness gradually dropped from him, and for the next hour he spoke more quietly, but with great despondency.

Perhaps when one realised that his eyes were still smarting from the dust of the ashes of shattered ambition one could understand. And there *were* moments that afternoon when I was convinced that Ludendorff had been thinking more of Germany than of himself.

He came out to the car with me. I think he had got a lot of poison out of his system, and his leave-taking was more friendly than I had dared to expect.

"Things *are* better, your Excellency," I said, as he held my hand, "you must admit it."

"Perhaps—perhaps!" and he turned away his head and gazed over the mountains, "but the future—the future—what of that?"

I looked back as the car turned down the hill. He was still standing there in the cold, bare-headed and without an overcoat—looking to the mountains.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT

AFTER the visit to Munich and Ludendorff, I spent a few days motoring through the country, acquainting myself with the conditions and people. Eventually I arrived in Berchtesgaden, that enchanting little town in the mountains where the Crown Prince Rupprecht lived in the mediaeval castle, part of the modest portion of the once fabulously wealthy property of the Wittelsbachs, which he was allowed to retain after the Revolution. His Royal Highness was not at the moment in the town, but had invited me to the Castle of Hohenburg, which belonged to the family of the former Dukes of Nassau, and was at this time the home of the Dowager Grand Duchess of Luxemburg (Infanta of Portugal) and the Prince's new mother-in-law. Prince Rupprecht's first wife, a sister of the Queen of the Belgians, had died some years previously, and he had married now the young and lovely Princess Antonia of Luxemburg.

So, to Hohenburg I went, enchanted on the journey by one scene after another of surpassing loveliness. I was high above the castle when I saw it first. Washed yellow, it gleamed in the morning sun like a gold nugget dropped on a carpet of green velvet. The near-by lake radiated silver, green and gold.

It lay as in a green jade bowl, in a ring of forested hills, beyond and around which rose a range of majestic snow-capped mountains.

Had my breath not been taken away by the beauty of my surroundings, it certainly would have been by what then happened. No human being was in sight. Suddenly there came, whistled through the air, the melody of an old Jacobite song that had been sung to me, and that I had sung since my cradle days :

“ Bonnie Charlie’s noo awa’ safely ower the friendly main,  
 Mony a heart will brak in two should he no come back again.  
 Will ye no come back again, will ye no come back again?  
 Better lo’ed ye canna’ be. Will ye no come back again? ”

Never out of my own Highlands had I heard it before. I picked up my field glasses and searched the hillside from whence it had seemed to come. Clearly and faultlessly the tune was repeated. And then I found him. Seated on a knoll in an opening of the trees about half-a-mile away was a man. He was dressed in Bavarian costume. Leather breeches, grey coat and the green hat with the little tuft of deer hair. One arm lay caressingly round the neck of a black retriever. The dog’s head lay snuggled up against the man’s knees. Another dog nosed in the grass in front. A gun, the explanation of the man’s occupation, lay across his knees. The chase was evidently over and this was a rest on the homeward way.

How in the world, I wondered, did a Bavarian gamekeeper come to know that Jacobite song? That, I realised regretfully, as I let the clutch in, I should probably never learn. I was expected at the castle for luncheon, and I must not dally longer on the



hilltops, enchanting and intriguing as the situation was. I drove on to Hohenburg.

A butler and a *Leibjäger*—that body-servant inseparable from royal personages—met me at the entrance and conducted me up a broad wooden staircase and down lengthy whitewashed corridors. The walls were covered with hunting trophies.

“Luncheon in half-an-hour, sir,” the *Leibjäger* said, as he ushered me into a gaily papered and early Victorian furnished sitting room. He indicated a dressing room door. I went in—and for the second time that morning I felt I must be bewitched. The floor and the bed were covered with Stuart tartan plaid.

What was this Jacobite complex—or was it a subtle compliment to me on account of my Scottish extraction? No! That was impossible. That spontaneous warble on the hillside was no serenade, and the tartan was old. I gave it up, washed my face, dusted my shoes, put on a fresh collar and sat down by the open window to wait for a summons. I was high up in the top of the castle, and had a glorious view. The barking of dogs attracted my attention. I looked down and saw—my whistling gamekeeper. I made up my mind, ere I left the castle, I should find out all about him, the tune, and the tartan.

For several minutes I sat there wondering about the man I was going to meet. His popularity in his own country was beyond question. Since his father, the old deposed ruler, had died a year previously, the people always called Prince Rupprecht “your Majesty.” They wanted to proclaim him King, and

their complaint was that he discouraged their attempts to do so. My few days' sojourn in South Germany had given me ample proof that Bavaria was Rupprecht's, and Rupprecht Bavaria's.

The Crown Prince was wiser than his people. He knew that to create a monarchy in the middle of a republican country would be to create a position untenable and dangerous. But his partisans were less far-seeing and were beginning to wonder if he were not "luke-warm." They could not understand why he did not plot like Ludendorff and why he did not start a revolution.

What was he like I wondered, this man who knew how to wait. He had been Commander-in-Chief in Brussels during the War, and one had heard of the Belgian atrocities. We had heard stories of babies cut out of their mother's wombs and carried on the bayonets of Prince Rupprecht's soldiers. And of the children who had been sent home to their mothers with their hands cut off and tied round their necks with ribbon. The tale of the Canadian soldiers who had been crucified in the Bavarian lines had enjoyed wide popularity. The celebrated corpse factory was said to have been the bright particular idea of the ogre Rupprecht.

"Curious," I ruminated, "that anyone about whom so much that was barbarous has been reported should seemingly be so beloved by all who know him."

I was brought with a jerk from thought to action.

"His Royal Highness begs you to join him," said the "bodyguard," bowing in the doorway.

"Well, anyhow the War is over," I said to myself,

as I followed the man in the green livery, "and he can't have *me* crucified."

It is customary for Royalty to have their guests await them instead of being on the spot to receive them, as is usual in less exalted circles. In the ante-room to which I was conducted I found a couple of pleasant-looking, middle-aged Ladies-in-Waiting, and a good friend of my own, Count Joseph Soden. While we were engaged in the formalities of introduction, a door, opposite to that through which I had come in, opened, and in walked—my whistling ghillie! I suppressed, with difficulty, a gasp of astonishment. The ogre himself! He presented me to his wife, a lovely, slim, olive-skinned girl, with dark Italian eyes and black hair, then to her sisters, a bevy of four attractive young ladies who followed in her train. First the Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, fair and handsome, the only one of a blonde Teutonic type. Following her came the eldest sister, a fragile *spirituelle* blue-eyed girl whose delicate face expressed her eager interest in a world that was not this. She was the ex-Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, that ethereal little Princess, who, bitterly humiliated by the German violation of her country, had abdicated during the War in favour of her second sister. She was gentle and sweet-voiced, and seemed to live within herself. She had been happiest in the convent where since her abdication she had lived; she was preparing herself for that better world into which she just slipped quietly away a few months later.

Then came the two younger sisters, one of whom had just married a son of the King of Saxony. The



*Grainier*

EX-CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT OF BAVARIA



fourth, who looked a mere child, was accompanied by her fiancé, a young scion of the House of Thurn and Taxis, whose fluffy side whiskers and assumption of fierceness were insufficient to camouflage effectively his natural youthfulness.

There remained Prince Felix of Bourbon, Prince of Parma, the husband of the reigning Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, and a brother of the ex-Empress Zita of Austria. He was a tall, good-looking Italian of about twenty-five, and had been educated in an English Roman Catholic college.

Our hostess, the Dowager Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, Princess of Braganza, was a handsome, beautifully turned-out woman, seemingly still in the early forties. She was the type for whom the ordinary verb "to walk" seemed entirely inadequate. She *swept* into a room; she *swept* round the table; she *swept* towards me. She was haughty, but she was gracious.

I sat on the right of the Crown Princess and opposite his Royal Highness, whom I thus had an opportunity of studying. He was, at the time, fifty-two, and, in spite of his white hair and grizzled appearance, he gave the impression of a much younger man. Medium height, lithe slim figure, he had clear blue alert eyes—the eyes of a hunter, which indeed he was. He radiated good nature, health and virility.

The serious business of my visit was naturally not touched upon during luncheon. I was, however, consumed with curiosity about the tune and the tartan, and seized an opportunity of mentioning that I had

been born and bred in the Highlands of Scotland. The Crown Prince was immediately interested and told me how in his student days he used to try and save enough from his allowance of ninety marks a month to travel.

"I've tramped the Scottish Highlands from 'Dark Loch Mohr to Isle of Skye.' I used to trudge across country with my pack on my back. No one knew me. Heavenly! To them I was just a raw lad with a funny accent."

"Naturally," he said, "the Stuart country interested me most."

"Why 'naturally,' sir?" I asked. And then some little window opened in my mind. "Why—of course—of course," I cried, jumping from my chair in my excitement; "I know who you are."

Prince Rupprecht looked at me with a funny quizzical smile.

"Well! Who am I?"

I put my hands on the table and leaning towards him a little breathless with excitement, I said:

"You—you are the direct heir through the Stuarts to the throne of England. You are the 'King across the Water'."

"How did you know?" he asked with some interest.

"Because I heard no less a person than His Majesty King George of England himself say so," I said.

"Oh! He knows? . . . Well," he added, laughingly, "if you have the opportunity, please assure His Majesty from me that I have no intention of pressing my claim."

His claim was in fact less remote than that of the House of Hanover, and went back to that of Henrietta Maria, the daughter of Charles the First, who married the Duke of Orleans, Louis the Fourteenth's brother. She died before she was twenty-five—of poison, contemporary gossip said—and Bossuet pronounced for her one of the most famous of his funeral orations. "*Madame se meurt—Madame est morte.*" She left two young daughters, one of whom married into the house of Savoy, and from her Prince Rupprecht was descended.

I next asked him about the tartan bedroom. I had been at Balmoral a year before, and the bedrooms there had been curtained and carpeted with the same material. The explanation was that the castle of Hohenburg had at one time belonged to the Duke of Leiningen, the first husband of the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother, and Prince Rupprecht's explanation was that the Duchess had probably taken to Hohenburg "a bit that was left over from Balmoral."

After luncheon his Royal Highness suggested taking me for a little walk and showing me the country. He handed me an *Alpenstock* and looked doubtfully at my shoes.

"Are you a good walker?" he asked. "You are! Well, we'll have to get you properly shod before we start."

A few minutes later I clattered out wearing the largest, heaviest pair of ironclad boots the *Leibjäger* could produce. Before we returned that afternoon I was glad of them. His Royal Highness's conception of



a little walk coincided with my idea of a mountaineering expedition.

The whole party waved us *Aufwiedersehen*, and the Dowager Grand Duchess "commanded" us to be back for tea. When we had waved back for the last time and settled down into a good swinging stride, I asked the Prince how he managed to withstand the demands of his people for his restoration to the throne of Bavaria.

"I am primarily interested in only one restoration," he replied, "the restoration of this country to peace by peaceful methods."

On the question of disarmament Prince Rupprecht's views differed little from those of von Kahr and Escherich. He was plain and unemotional.

"Unless you can see that disarmament—at the moment—will be a disadvantage and not an advantage to you, you will of course insist upon it, and create chaotic conditions here. In such case your chance of Reparations will be considerably lessened. Therefore avoid the chaos. Take the long-sighted view. Don't hold the sixpence so close to the eye that you can't see the half-crown beyond. I'm in something of the same position myself at the moment. I'm offered a throne. I might take it—and sit on it for three weeks. Why should I do that to please a party? If I'm to be King it will be of a country and not of a class. My throne must be set on something less precarious than a tight-rope. What could I offer my country so long as the stranglehold of the Peace Treaty is on her? I would be adding to the difficulties of Bavaria—not lessening them. The restoration of a monarchy

today in any part of Germany would, in the eyes of the Entente, mean the revival of militarism or some other reason for the imposing of further penalties on this stricken country."

We had climbed up into the snow.

"Stand here," he said, guiding me to a point from which we had a glorious view. "This always reminds me of your country."

"You like my country, your Royal Highness?"

He was silent for a moment. "Yes—I like your country."

We started our descent and I had to concentrate on my feet for the next minute or two. When the going was a little easier he said :

"I wish they did not think so badly of me in England. Tell me, is it really the case that there are grown-up people there who do believe the tales I've read about myself? The Belgian atrocities? The corpse factory? The crucifixion of the Canadian soldiers? Do they really believe all that now—still—after the war fever has abated? Strange—when I think of it—that because of my disapproval of the German Naval policy before the war, I was supposed, even after the outbreak of hostilities, to be pro-British."

We were slithering down a snow-covered slope when he made this astonishing statement. When I caught up with him I looked in his face to see if he were quite serious.

"You! *You* were supposed to be pro-British?" I said.

"Yes," he said—and we both stopped for breath—"I was! Why are you so astonished?"

"Because. . . ." I hesitated.

"Well . . . go on."

"Because . . . I remember reading in the British Press the copy of an order issued to the Bavarian Army in October 1914. That order stated that at last the Bavarian Army was opposite the British troops, and instructed that no prisoners were to be taken. And that order was signed by Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria."

The effect of my words astonished me. He was apparently utterly taken aback.

"You mean—you mean you actually read that?"

"Yes—more or less. That was the gist of it."

"And that part—that part about the prisoners—that was in it?"

"It was. Now you understand why I was inclined to be incredulous when you told me you had been suspected of pro-British sympathies."

He looked at me—then away from me into the distance as if he were groping mentally after something.

"Wait . . . wait," he said, "there is something here stranger than you know." Then having apparently overtaken some elusive thought, he went on. "When that order was placed before me for signature it did contain words which might have conveyed such an inference. Sometimes in the anxiety or exuberance of the moment such phrases are formed without their full significance being realised. When I read those words I drew my pen through them and obliterated every one with red ink. And no order containing such words or meaning was ever issued over my

signature, nor over any other. What I cannot understand, is how the contents of that original draft became known—outside the Staff!”

A certified copy of the order as issued was sent to me the following day from the Bavarian War Office. The translation is as follows :

“ H.Q. 6th Army. Douai, 19-10-1914.

### ARMY ORDER

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“ SOLDIERS OF THE 6TH ARMY.

“ We have now the good fortune to have the English in front, the troops of a nation whose determination for years it has been to encircle us with enemies and to strangle us.

“ It is they above all who are responsible for this appalling and bloody war.

“ Therefore, when you now go forward against this enemy, wipe out the score you have against them for their treacherous scheming and for the many heavy sacrifices we have made. Prove to them that it is no easy matter to wipe the Germans out of the world's history. Prove it to them by intensifying your assaults, showing what a German assault can really be.

“ AT THEM !

“ RUPPRECHT,

“ *Crown Prince of Bavaria.*”

“ I admit,” said the Crown Prince, when he had quoted the order as best he could from memory,

“that the wording was strong, but remember, the proposition my troops were about to tackle—fighting Scotch troops—was altogether different from that which they had had to deal with up till then. It was not only the French now. *I* knew what the difference was and I had to make the Army understand that the easy-going days were over. The gloves had to come off. But never, under any circumstances, would I have tolerated any ill-treatment of prisoners.”

There seemed no doubt as to his sincerity, and during subsequent visits which I had the privilege of paying him I have had no reason to alter the favourable impression Prince Rupprecht made on me that first day.

He was full of pleasant memories of his last visit to England. The occasion was the Coronation of King George. Of all those whom he had then met Lord Rosebery was the one he had thought most of. They had discovered a strong mutual interest in Napoleon.

“And that reminds me,” said Prince Rupprecht, “that I should like very much to send Lord Rosebery, if I may, a copy of a letter written to me by a relative who was on Napoleon’s staff. It is one of the few existing proofs that Napoleon was subject to epileptic fits.”

Later I took this document to Lord Rosebery, who was glad to hear again of Prince Rupprecht. He well remembered their conversation—which took place at Buckingham Palace.

“I alluded,” he wrote to me later, referring to this same talk, “perhaps indiscreetly, to the suicide of the mad King of Bavaria, which happened

when I was at the Foreign Office. I am glad that Rupprecht had turned out so well, and sincerely wish that he may be restored to the throne. This I have always thought would have been the right solution at the time when the so-called Peace was made. Our monarchical ministry," Lord Rosebery wrote to me, "appears to have laboured to establish bastard republics in all the countries it has dealt with."

We walked until darkness fell, and Prince Rupprecht talked about his life before, during and after the War.

"You cannot realise what it is for me to be able to do nothing—nothing at all to help ; to have even to appear to one's people as unwilling. That is what they are beginning to think of me. 'He is half-hearted, he throws cold water on every scheme'."

We had to walk warily in the twilight, and the latter part of the descent was completed more or less in silence.

When we struck the main road, he pulled out his watch.

"Heavens ! Five o'clock. We're late for tea."

"But does that matter ?" I asked.

"Matter ? *Matter ?*" And a shade of anxiety clouded his face. "I—I live with my mother-in-law. Let's run !"

And Field Marshal H.R.H. the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria took to his heels—and ran.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

## HITLER'S BID FOR POWER

**M**IDNIGHT, December 31st, 1922. The Adlon was filled with a well-dressed cosmopolitan crowd dining and dancing at luxury prices. "There goes 1922," said an elderly German ex-diplomatist, as the last chime of twelve struck, adding, as he drained his glass of German champagne, "and good riddance of bad rubbish. Look," he said, pointing. At the next table sat an enormously fat blonde. Her flesh overflowed in abundance the various generous openings of a tight black satin dress. She was blowing up a large balloon. Her cheeks and chest were swelled and reddened with the effort. "There goes Germany in 1923, inflated till it bursts." There was a bang. "See what she's left with," my friend went on, "a ruined bit of useless material. That's what we're coming to. Well ! here's to it, whatever it may be !" He emptied his glass and was about to smash it, when he changed his mind, and putting it down, he said resignedly, "No ! it isn't worth wasting a glass on."

The fulfilment policy of 1922 had failed. In one year the mark had fallen from 900 to the pound to 40,000. Wirth had retired from the Chancellorship in November and had been succeeded by Dr. Cuno.

I had known Dr. Cuno, one of the directors of the Hamburg-America Line, since the early days of 1919. He was a thorough Conservative, a very different type from his rough and ready-made predecessors. Well-born, well-educated, well-dressed—he was known as “the frock-coated Chancellor.” In 1919 he had taken me in his launch through the docks and harbours of Hamburg. It was a scene of desolation.

“There is Germany,” Dr. Cuno said to me. “Haven’t we, too, our devastated areas? Who is going to restore this?” Neither of us then thought that later, he himself would be called on to try. In November 1922 he was persuaded to accept the legacy of Dr. Wirth’s “fulfilment” policy. It was a miserable inheritance. The Cuno Cabinet responded to the occupation of the Ruhr with a policy of passive resistance. This threw every working man in the greatest industrial area in Germany out of work. Ten million people had to be supported by charity. At one time this was costing Germany £2,000,000 a day. Equal to Germany’s daily expenditure in the Great War.

Charity demoralises, and trouble broke out all over the country. Germany stood the strain and drain until the country was on the brink of civil war. Passive resistance proved a complete failure, and Dr. Cuno resigned in August 1923, and returned, with a sigh of relief, to his former successful vocation. Into the vacant place stepped Dr. Gustav Stresemann, who eventually led Germany to sanity and safety.

Germany will always have this to her credit—she produced the greatest—if not the *only* great politician



of post-war times. If Germans were, as a rule, incapable of putting a true estimate on human nature, Gustav Stresemann was one of the exceptions who proved that rule. In the period of Germany's worst ups-and-downs, Stresemann (who became Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1923) stood astride the precarious see-saw, arresting with almost incredible skill a movement here that threatened disaster from within, and adjusting there a swing that might have crashed his machine against the stony wall without. Like President Ebert, there was nothing in his appearance that impressed. Augustus John painted him in a most unpleasing picture. It was an excellent portrait, but Stresemann should never have had his portrait painted. Stresemann should be preserved for posterity by his work only. That will always, not only in German history, but in the history of the world, be a splendid memorial.

Gustav Stresemann might have lived to an old age, but he spared neither his mind nor his bodily strength in the service of his country. He was not physically fitted for such a strain. He died on October 3rd, 1929, and history will record his name among the great.

But it was a tortuous path along which Stresemann had to lead. Not since November days in 1918 had there been such a danger of general upheaval. Bavaria, as usual, was a hot-bed of plots against the Federal Government. General von Lossow had been sent there by the Minister for Defence, Gessler, to maintain order. He was given supreme control of the Bavarian Army. Von Kahr, to whom the

Bavarian Government had given full civil powers, arranged with Lossow and Colonel Seiszer, the Bavarian Chief of Police, to form a triple dictatorship, restore the Bavarian monarchy and bring about a counter-revolution all over Germany. It was a popular programme, and included Admiral von Tirpitz, Admiral Scheer and Hugo Stinnes.

I saw a good deal of Hugo Stinnes, the German Napoleon of finance. He used to sit alone dining in the Adlon night after night. Perhaps, he himself was hardly aware to what a mammoth the concerns in which he was interested had grown ; like the old German military machine, they went on expanding until they cracked.

He was a strange-looking man. The intense pallor of a mournful face was accentuated by a black Van Dyck beard and a pair of dark, cold, deep-sunk eyes. One could imagine one of the more sinister rôles at Oberammergau being filled by just such a type. He died in middle age, and the great concentrated industrial mass of which he held the controlling strings fell to pieces—with no great disadvantage to the country in general.

The revolution, which was to be sponsored by von Tirpitz, Scheer and Stinnes, was to be bloodless, although backed by the National Army. But Ludendorff also was in Bavaria, and he too had been plotting. With Hitler and an army recruited from ex-officers of the old régime, and with the irregular military organisations, he was to co-operate with the notorious Captain Erhardt—of Kapp *Putsch* fame—and, with Erhardt's army, march to Berlin. But first,

his presumptuous rivals had to be dealt with. These—the “trio”—von Kahr, Lossow and Seiszer—held a meeting on October 8th in the Bürgerbräuhaus to make final plans. Thousands were present. Von Kahr was speaking.

Then came the interruption.

Hitler, accompanied by a dozen armed followers, entered the hall, which he had surrounded by six hundred of his men. Brandishing a revolver, he mounted the platform. With dramatic gesture—Hitler is a consummate actor—he pointed his revolver point blank at von Kahr and, raising his arm, enjoined silence on the audience. Kahr sat speechless. It was not fear, but rage, mortification and disappointment that seemed to be choking him. Hitler then, in a few short phrases, interspersed with revolver shots, proceeded to depose Ebert, Stresemann, the Central Government, the Bavarian Government, etc. He seemed thoroughly to enjoy this orgy of overthrow and only stopped when he could think of no one else to dispose of.

Von Kahr, Lossow and Seiszer were then ordered to follow him to an ante-room. There—still comporting himself as the perfect stage hero—Hitler gave the order: “Post sentries here! Only with my permission is anyone to leave this room alive.” He then addressed the trio. “We have no time to waste: either you throw in your lot with us, or we shall take care that you will be in no position to interfere in any way.”

“I had to decide quickly,” said von Kahr to me afterwards. “This man was about to plunge the

country into a blood bath, without the faintest chance of achieving anything. Without leadership, without Lossow, Seiszer or myself, the Reichswehr might be induced to join the rebels, and then the evil would probably spread all over the country. There was only one way to prevent this : we must get to the Reichswehr and to the police at once. I decided to give my word and break it. I knew what I was risking. I had to sacrifice either my country or my honour—it should be my honour. I gave my word, and, with a look made Lossow and Seiszer understand. ‘*Komödie spielen*’ (‘Fool them’) I whispered, and the two soldiers nodded their understanding.”

By this time Ludendorff, who had been telephoned to, had arrived. Hands were shaken all round, backs were smacked, and the new ministerial offices bestowed. Hitler swashbuckled, Ludendorff arranged his frock-coat and assumed a pose of heavy dignity. Lossow and Seiszer cursed below their breath, and von Kahr put his tongue in his cheek. The procession of newly-appointed Ministers then returned to the meeting.

Pandemonium reigned there, and only after another revolver display was Hitler able to proclaim the new appointments. Rapturous applause greeted the self-declared saviours of the nation. The audience enjoyed itself to the full.

Seiszer had meanwhile disappeared, and, on leaving the building, sent orders to the outlying Reichswehr to march to Munich. He then rejoined von Kahr and Lossow, and all three left the meeting and took steps to determine the attitude of the Reichswehr and police.

As soon as they were confident that these were still loyal, a communication was sent to Ludendorff informing him that neither von Kahr, Lossow nor Seiszer considered themselves bound by the promise forced from them, and that they, with the Reichswehr and police, would take every measure to prevent further action by Ludendorff and Hitler. These latter had, by this time, made their headquarters in the Bavarian War Office, and this communication came as a veritable bombshell.

The dispositions of the von Kahr troops were then made, and, at nine in the morning, Ludendorff and Hitler, having declared their intention to do or to die, sallied forth at the head of their following—composed mainly of schoolboys armed with rifles—not so much bent on desperate enterprise as on the simple discovery of what would happen next.

It was a bedraggled, dispirited procession. Ludendorff had sung his swansong, and they all knew it. Up the narrow Residenz Strasse to the Odeon Platz they marched, Ludendorff and Hitler in the van, their ranks swelled by crowds of onlookers, who only seldom in these hard times were provided with such excellent free entertainment. Just before entering the Odeon Platz an abrupt halt was made, for advancing into the square from the opposite side were the Landwehr. The Landwehr halted. A young officer walked towards Ludendorff, and, raising his hand, said, "No further, or we fire!" There was a moment's pause, and then a rifle, from the near vicinity of Ludendorff, was fired, and the officer fell dead. Another rifle cracked and a sergeant-major of the Landwehr got a



# A FLAT REFUSAL

*Officer* : Get up, General. We shan't hurt you.

*Ludendorff* : No fear ! I hate the sound of firing.

*Officer* : Right, Sir.

*Ludendorff* : Call off your blasted Reichswehr-Bolshevists  
and then I'll stand up.

*Officer* : Right, Sir.

This cartoon was distributed as a *Flugblatt*, a sheet scattered over  
the country by aeroplane for political propaganda



bullet in his heart. The Landwehr raised their rifles. Ludendorff, experienced soldier, deciding to do rather than to die, threw himself flat on the ground. His action was followed by Hitler. In the next second the Landwehr fired, and several Hitlerites lay alongside their leaders. After a few seconds' pause Ludendorff gingerly raised his head and, seeing that the Landwehr had evidently no intention of repeating the volley, he slowly, with exaggerated attempt at dignity, raised himself to his feet, to find himself alone. Of his gallant troops only those lying on the ground remained. Even Hitler had wriggled himself round the corner and had taken to his heels.

The Hitlerites had disappeared in every direction, but troops were in command of all exits, and in a short time practically all the rebels had been disarmed.

Ludendorff was arrested and released on parole. Hitler was imprisoned, von Kahr, Lossow and Seiszer went back to their posts and decided that plotting did not pay. Prussia might be bad enough—but she was preferable to the Ludendorff lot.

In the quaint old Bishopric of Berchtesgaden, tucked away in the mountains four hours' journey from Munich, sat, quietly waiting and watching, the man who more than any other was interested in all these events.

For years Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria had endeavoured to control the turbulent spirits of the misguided enthusiasts who would force a crown upon him. Again, after this last bubble had burst, they came to him. They argued with him ; they pleaded with



him. He alone, they said, could gather all the threads together. He alone could pleat into a strong ply the broken strands held by von Kahr and Ludendorff. Under his leadership Germany could be swept clean ! The Government of the Empire would pass to Bavaria, the one State worthy and fit to rule, and so on.

Politely he refused their pleadings ; patiently he answered their arguments ; conscientiously he tried to show them the futility of attempting anything by force so long as there was hope of achieving improvement by other means. Their denseness irritated him, and when, yet again they offered him the Kingdom of Bavaria, which he could have had for the lifting of a little finger at any moment during the last two years, he answered them :

*“Meine Herren ! Eine Dreckhaufe ist kein Thron für einen Wittelsbach.”* (“Gentlemen ! A dunghill is no throne for a Wittelsbach.”)

## CHAPTER XXXV

### LICHNOWSKY

“ ‘ **T**ELL the Truth and shame the Devil’ may be an excellent copy-book axiom, but——”  
 The living example of its futility in practice did not finish the sentence, but with a gesture of hopelessness shrivelled in the big arm-chair into an attitude of mingled resignation and despondency.

When he had walked into the British Embassy one night in 1922 wearing, to the general astonishment, the ribbon and star of the Victorian Order and accompanied by his handsome golden-haired wife, one had been struck by the austerity and general gloom of expression which contrasted so strongly with the radiance of his companion. Tyler, the butler, announced “ Their Excellencies——” and then made that momentary pause with which he invariably prefixed an announcement of importance (thereby gaining the attention of those already assembled), “ Prince and Princess Lichnowsky.”

The former German Ambassador to the Court of St. James was a striking-looking man. He was about sixty, medium height, good figure. A head that gave the impression of having been rough-hewn out of Aberdeen granite. Large, grim, and grey-haired. The Princess was about twenty years younger. Fair

and fresh complexioned, with a mouth and eyes that smiled together.

After dinner I took the opportunity of saying to Prince Lichnowsky I was interested to see that he had retained and was wearing the Victorian Order.

"I hear," he said, "that some Orders have been returned. I was given this by King George. I am proud of it. I shall wear it always when I have the opportunity and shall only return it when I am asked to do so!"

I had been three years in Berlin, but this was the first time any of us had seen the Lichnowskys. I asked him the reason.

"Surely you know," he said; "everybody knows. Come along and see me tomorrow and I'll tell you."

And on the following day I heard the story, which has since become public property. Briefly—for the benefit of those who may not know it—Prince Lichnowsky after his departure from London on the outbreak of war had been branded in Germany as a failure. "He had been the dupe of Sir Edward Grey. He had been fooled into the belief that England had not wanted war," and so on. In order to justify himself to future generations he had written, as a secret document to be placed in the family archives, *My London Mission*, in which he expressed his conviction—giving very substantial reasons—that Germany, by her encouragement of Austria, had been in a great measure responsible for the War. The document was, owing to the indiscretion of one of Prince Lichnowsky's friends, made public and copies were circulated to the Staff, the War Office,

the Foreign Office, members of the Reichstag, and even to the troops in the trenches. The effect may be imagined. When the whole nation was praying that the Almighty should declare in the favour of the righteous, the former German Ambassador to London had written proclaiming Germany's guilt !

Every effort was made to suppress the distribution of the pamphlet. But the author, to put it mildly, was in a very unhappy position. Had von Kühlmann, his former Counsellor, not been in office at the time there is more than a possibility that Lichnowsky would have been shot for high treason. Princess Lichnowsky was begged by friends to have him certified insane to prevent his arrest. The Herrenhaus (House of Lords) appointed a Commission to enquire into the matter. Prince Lichnowsky, his nerves shattered, could not face the enquiry and disappeared to his Bohemian property. The Herrenhaus expelled him from its membership. The Prince was disgraced.

For years he remained in seclusion until the sympathy of Lord and Lady D'Abernon encouraged him to face his own world again. He had committed a fault of judgment in entrusting his friends with such a document, knowing what the result of mischance or indiscretion must be. For that he had to suffer. Hard as his position in the Republic was after the War, it would have been infinitely worse had the old régime returned. His own vindication was built on their guilt. He had proved himself right by proving them wrong. But the old régime did not come back and Prince Lichnowsky might have been forgiven if—when, in his self-imposed exile, he heard the news

of the Emperor's departure to Holland—he had quoted another copy-book axiom which begins, “It's an ill wind——”

I was often able to entertain him in his own home. He cared little for Berlin and for three summers he lent me his beautiful house in the Buchen Strasse.

He had been happy in London, and never afterwards. Graetz, his magnificent property in Bohemia, had been taken by the Czechs, the estate confiscated, and the Castle, nominally still the property of the Prince, used as a barracks. I went there with him in 1924. We had been driven over from Kuchelna, the shooting box at which he then lived. Standing on the broken terrace looking over a magnificent, neglected park he repeated sadly those words of Lord Grey, spoken at the outset of the War, “The lights are going out all over Europe.”

He never regained his spirits. At the end he put up no fight. He died in 1928, a loyal patriotic German and a true friend of England.

I once asked Prince Lichnowsky about Baron von Kühlmann, who was said to have intrigued against him. There was, and still exists in some prejudiced or ignorant quarters, a belief that Kühlmann was one of the evil geniuses of German politics, and that his career in England—he was Counsellor at the German Embassy in London for some years immediately preceding the outbreak of war—was one long intrigue against England.

Prince Lichnowsky told me that the tales were utterly untrue.

"Why, then," I asked him, "do these tales abound?"

"Well," said the ex-Ambassador, "Kühlmann was clever enough to make people a little afraid of him and not clever enough to take any trouble about making them like him. There was too much Bavarian *brusquerie* about him; too much 'take it or leave it.' That rubbed people up the wrong way—and it only requires two or three disagreeable acquaintances to make a few disagreeable remarks—*et voilà!*"

My own experience of Kühlmann is such that if I wished to know what was being done in Germany; what should be done; what could be done; how it should be done; and when, where and with whom it should be done, I should make straight for Baron Kühlmann and ask him!

He was Secretary for Foreign Affairs for a time, and was the first statesman who had the courage to tell the German nation that the War could not be won by military means only. He strongly opposed the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, and when this was proposed he made a special journey to the Kaiser's headquarters to protest against it. He had a long audience with His Majesty, who was also of Kühlmann's way of thinking. The Kaiser promised to give no assent to the proposal, and said to the Foreign Minister:

"I would rather cut off my hand than sign an approval of such a policy."

"And," said von Kühlmann, "he meant it. I left happy, but imagine my feelings when, within twenty-four hours, I was informed officially in Berlin that he

*had* signed it. Tirpitz had gone to him after I left. The old story : the man with the last word always got the Kaiser."

The result, of course, is well-known—the "Lusitania" was sunk, and the sinking of the "Lusitania" brought America into the War.

I do not think we have heard the last of Baron von Kühlmann, and I devoutly hope that I am right.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE FINAL RECKONING

**D**URING the occupation of the Ruhr, Control ceased entirely for the time being. The German Liaison Department refused to act, and without their co-operation we could do practically nothing. General von Cramon, the Chief of that Department, who had never hit it off with General Nollet, resigned, and took the opportunity of expressing himself in print. Here are some passages from an article which appeared on January 21st, 1923:—

“ At the head of the Military Commission of Control is a French General, representative of that country which has on its own responsibility and without real reason broken the Treaty. Who will blame Germany if she uses this reason for refusing to deal further with the representatives of France? Why should the present Government, whose declaration in the Reichstag left little in the way of clarity to be desired, not now ignore the French and Belgians and refuse to have anything to do with people of countries who have treated—and continue to treat—every national right in such a contemptible way? Why should not now an English officer represent the Inter-Allied Powers in Germany? ”



“ General Bingham, who represents England, has, as it is, always to take General Nollet’s place when the latter undertakes those famous journeys to Paris with the object of working up the feeling there against Germany. General Bingham is no friend of Germany: that he has proved often enough. But he is a high-thinking, just and broad-minded man, who only unwillingly associates himself with the cantankerous and annoying instructions of General Nollet. Naturally, he could at no time officially admit this, nor would he do so today. Although I am certainly no friend of England, I have always associated willingly with him and with Colonel Stewart Roddie, because one could always work with them in a businesslike way, and I am convinced that, had General Bingham been Chief of the Inter-Allied Commission of Control, the disarmament of Germany would have been carried out just as efficiently as it has been, and that many of the existing difficulties would have been met and overcome in a manner which probably would have been entirely satisfactory to the Inter-Allied Powers.

“ I can scarcely imagine, that in the present excited condition of the people, General Nollet and his French satellites will find their work very pleasant, and would, therefore, also for this reason, advise that the above-named gentleman should be cleared out.”

There was more of this. I do not know what effect General von Cramon imagined this was going to have on the British Representatives of the Commission, but

I know the effect it did have. I took the translation of the article to General Bingham who, having read it, said laconically, "Poor old Cramon! Shortsighted as usual. No wonder the old die-hard resigned!"

This was an uncomfortable time for the Commission. The French and Belgians suffered most. Many hotels and restaurants refused to house or serve them. Officers on the District Commissions had to clean their rooms, make their beds, do their own cooking and laundry. The Germans were not aggressive. That would have been too expensive. Only on three occasions during the years of Control were there incidents which could be called serious. In Bremen, Passau and Ingolstadt French officers were stoned. No one was much hurt, but it cost Germany £50,000.

For ten months the entire Military Inter-Allied Commission sat and did nothing, the cost, of course, being borne by Germany. But at a time when passive resistance was costing the country £2,000,000 a day, and when the exchange had dropped in a few months from forty thousand to *four hundred million*, this additional item was possibly considered a mere bagatelle.

By the end of 1923 inflation had ceased, and early in 1924 the mark was eventually stabilised. Germany woke out of her bad dream, and for the first time since 1914 showed real signs of returning health and normality. Control was resumed and even surprise visits were carried out without unpleasantness.

The bulk of the work had already been done by the end of 1922. Germany had been disarmed, not to the extent demanded by the Treaty of Versailles, but to one which ruled out any question of aggression on her

part. In 1922 General le Rond, commanding the French forces in Upper Silesia, asked the Military Commission for 2,000 revolvers. We could not collect even this number for him, they had already been destroyed. Guns were disposed of by having a strip cut out of them by oxy-acetylene lamps. Rifles and small arms were broken up. Shells had their explosive melted out. Powder was burnt. Machinery intended solely for the production of war material was broken up. The Germans at times made infantile and even comic efforts to persuade the Commission to allow them to keep certain war material on the grounds that it would be used for peaceful—even rural—purposes.

Flame-throwers, they contended, could be used to burn insects off trees. Range-finders would be used to take the height of the clouds. Ramps surrounding fortresses could be used for accommodating certain special breeds of chicken. All this was of course sheer waste of time and involved much unnecessary correspondence. The Armament Section alone dealt with 110,000 letters in the first four and a half years. It took seven to satisfy the Allies that Germany was disarmed. Had conditions been normal Germany could have done this in eighteen months and got rid of the colossal expenditure involved by the Commission. But the whole reason for disarmament was abnormal, and when one looks back and considers the comparatively few serious difficulties put in our way one must, in justice, acknowledge that Germany's general attitude towards disarmament was better than might have been expected. In 1918 Germany had 260 divisions with perhaps 20,000 guns. At the com-

pletion of disarmament she had seven divisions and some 280 guns. A few items will be sufficient to give an idea of the scale on which destruction of armament was carried out :

Guns	...	...	...	...	33,550 <sup>1</sup>
Rifles and small arms	...	...	...	...	4,564,253
Machine-guns	...	...	...	...	87,950
Shells	...	...	...	...	38,109,808
Tons of powder	...	...	...	...	40,000

These figures do not include naval armaments. A Trustee Company called *Treuhandgesellschaft* was formed to collect and deliver up all war material. At one time no less than 400 centres of destruction were functioning, each under supervision of Allied officers. Seven thousand factories, which had been employed on the production of war material, were controlled. Some were razed to the ground, in others the machinery was broken up, and in the remainder such machinery as could be converted to peace-time production was, after conversion, permitted to be retained. Krupp's famous armament works at Essen were, in 1918, employing 107,000 workers on war material. By 1923 there were less than 50,000 in these works and these were making sewing machines and agricultural implements.

At Krupp's alone the armament section of the Commission destroyed 5,500 tons of machinery and 127,819 tons of other material. To what extent and in what direction the general economic condition of Europe has been affected by destruction on such a scale it would be interesting and instructive to learn.

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes the destruction of several thousand guns in course of manufacture, and of others abandoned by the Germans during the retreat.

Meantime the main object of the Allies had been achieved.

The personnel of the Commission had changed in 1924. A considerable reduction in numbers was made. General Nollet had become Minister of War in Paris. General Bingham left to become Governor of Jersey. Colonel Anstey was appointed to an Indian command. He was replaced by Colonel Fortescue Thompson, who brought with him a wife and two daughters, whom all of us adored. General Bingham was succeeded by General A. G. Wauchope.<sup>1</sup> It could not have been merely by luck that the War Office had filled the vacated post of Chief so perfectly. The live wire was followed by the electric spark. In a way General Wauchope's was a thankless task. The bulk of the work had been done, but, as was inevitable in an operation of such magnitude, countless adhesions had to be delicately yet firmly dealt with. General Bingham had spun a web of Control over Germany. General Wauchope ran along each strand. I went with him. Westphalia, East Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg. An autumn trip to Munich and Berchtesgaden, where we visited Prince Rupprecht, and those two distinguished soldiers sat long, each telling the other his version of the Great War. Then through Augsburg and Rothenburg up to Frankfurt. From there along the banks of the Rhine to Cologne, where General Sir Alexander Godley and Lady Godley held sway. The Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in the occupied area was one of the "sights" of Cologne. He was—and is still, I am glad

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Arthur Wauchope, Governor of Palestine.

to say—one of the finest-looking men in the British Army. His Headquarters in Cologne were always full of interesting people, but, nevertheless, he invariably seemed to have room for me. After Cologne General Wauchope needed a rest from duty, and we went to Denmark, Norway and Sweden. A glorious week in the Fjords to end with, and back to Berlin. If it were only for the charm of the companionship of General Wauchope I should always remember that autumn. His interests knew no limits. From a minnow to a salmon, from a daisy to an oak, from *Tom Jones* to *Sartor Resartus*, from a folk song to “Götterdämmerung.”

That was the autumn of 1925. Germany was disarmed, and to what material she still had concealed she was welcome. My department was closed down at the end of the year, and when one day in January 1926 I sat amid my packing cases in “Number 133” of the Adlon and mentally surveyed the backward track that led to January 1919 I had to admit that despite the many annoying obstacles one had had to tackle, it represented a slice of life I would never regret. Seven years I had lived in that apartment. Incident and interest had made them winged. Hundreds of memories, each linked with a smile or a tear, would bind me always to “Number 133”—von Kluck telling the story of the Marne, Cuno, Holtzendorff, Rathenau, the Blüchers, the Plesses, the D’Abernons, Augustus John, Gretchen the adventuress, Lord Hylton—over during the strikes and my delightful guest for a week—Lady Bingham and her fiddle, the Münsters and Marie Hay, Princess

Mafalda of Savoy—on her wedding trip with Prince Philipp of Hesse, sitting at the piano singing “Teresina” in a small sweet soprano,—these and scores of others.

I started sorting my papers—reports, cuttings, letters, photographs—tearing them up or putting them aside. The signature “Birdwood” caught my eye. “I am afraid this is all the information I can give you about the grave,” the letter ran. Some cell in my mind opened. General Birdwood, who commanded the Australian Forces, was one of those who had interested himself in the search for the lost grave of Prince Maximilian of Hesse. And suddenly I remembered the promise I had made to Princess Frederick Charles: “I don’t know how or when, but I shall try to get him back for you.”

And then, just as I was leaving for England, news reached me through the British Military Attaché in Paris that the grave had been found. And I learnt how it was that the Prince had lain so long undiscovered. Prince Max, in 1914, lay dying of wounds in France, in an English hospital. When the doctor, seeing he could not live, asked the unknown German boy if there was anything he could do for him, the young Prince said faintly, “Tell my cousin—I’m glad that—as it can’t be in Germany—it is with the English.”

“Can you give me your cousin’s address?” asked the doctor.

“Yes, just—the Queen of England,” whispered the boy and died.

The doctor thought him delirious. He picked up

the trinkets and papers that lay by the bedside. A photograph of his father, lying seriously wounded in Germany ; a snap-shot of his elder brother, killed in Roumania ; in a locket the photograph of a lovely girl, the eldest daughter of the Tzar of Russia. And then the doctor realised who his patient was.

They buried Prince Maximilian in the territory occupied by the English. A few days later this ground was fought over, and torn up by shell fire. The doctor was killed and only the Trappist monks in the monastery of Caestre knew where the body had lain. They looked for and found it and buried it secretly and reverently where, they hoped, their gallant foe might rest undisturbed by the ravages of war. But war dispersed the monks from Caestre, and for years the grave remained untraced.

With my information I went to the French Ambassador, M. de Marjorie. He at once gave me a letter to the Minister of the Interior. Prince Wolfgang, a younger brother of the dead boy, joined me in Paris, and together we went to the Ministry. Here we received every courtesy and help. Prince Wolfgang left Paris that night for Caestre and there the " Maire " of the little community told him where to look.

In the cemetery of the chapel of Caestre, just under the shrine of the blessed Virgin, he found his brother—and took him home.

And now, in the chapel of the grim old keep of Cronberg there are *two* flags—*two* helmets—and *two* swords.





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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE CRYPT HOUSE PRESS LIMITED,  
GLOUCESTER AND LONDON

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